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SPRING Punch

12



Have the lot, guv!

The night is young and hearts are high. The dinner was excellent, the dancing delightful, the girl divine and the car a Dauphine. What more could anyone want!

"Have the lot, guv?"

"My friend, I've got the lot."



RENAULT DAUPHINE

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O

The London Charivari

IT is pleasant to know that when Grivas finally left Cyprus "with an automatic pistol and ammunition pouch strapped to his waist" nobody was officious enough to ask him why these mementoes had not been handed in, as the agreement, strictly speaking, required. There are times when it is churlish to insist on the letter of the regulations. Very properly, no such laxity was shown to British troops returning home from Cyprus, who were rigorously searched by H.M. Customs for cigarettes, cameras and other dangerous contraband. Thousands of cigarettes were seized from these scoundrels. But why was no doctor present at Southampton to make sure that no one tried to sneak through with an unauthorized bullet in his back?

Going Up?

WHAT with Berlin, and Ike, and Iraq and one thing and another, last week seemed hardly the time for Herr Krupp to make the point that when large



concerns such as his were allowed to be "active . . . living standards rose much faster."

Flare Path

I WENT along to the Savoy the other day to see what I shall be *thinking* of wearing this spring after deciding that my outfit for 1955 still has another year in it. Wow! Listen, men. The

Keynotes this year are "dual colour" and "masculine flare." You pick out a bright thread of tone from your suiting and run up a waistcoat (eight or nine buttons) of the same old glory. You pinch in the waist, ha! and make the jacket blossom at the hips and shoulders. Most attractive and very fetching. Congratulations to the International Wool Secretariat for putting our men on the sartorial map. But couldn't they have timed their exhibition to avoid—for late-payers like me—a head-on clash with the Commissioners of Inland Revenue?

One Big, Happy Soup-Kitchen

IT was a relief to find that a claim for Britons as "the most gravy-stained



nation on earth" was only a London head-waiter's, criticizing our table-manners, not just another of those Tory standard-of-living boasts.

J. P. in Men's-Wear Probe

IF you favour the brighter sock, steer clear of Ipswich magistrates' court, where the chairman, Mr. S. J. Stearn, came down heavily last week on a seventeen-year-old accused whose socks were an offensive shade of pea-green; offensive, that is, to the Court, reported to have ruled, through Mr. Stearn's lips, "We hate to see a youth wearing such horrible socks." It was on the charge of receiving stolen cigarettes that the prisoner was found guilty and fined



"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall."

five pounds, however, and the actual socks, as far as I can make out, didn't appear on the charge sheet at all. My feeling is that Mr. Stearn's hatred of green socks is his private concern. We all have these pet hates. Some people even hate irrelevant pronouncements from the bench . . . and go direct from the courtroom to the haberdasher's round the corner to see if he has any purple socks with yellow stripes. I think this is what I should have done; and then gone and given myself up.

A Fan is Born

THAT Los Angeles mother who gave birth to her fifth baby while watching a gripping television show ("I didn't want to miss the end," she said) is bound to be made much of in future publicity by the programme company concerned; its executives will feel that this adequately compensates them for internal squabbles about the precise viewing figures that night.

The Giant Presses

THOUGH strong challengers since their acquisition of Hultons, Odhams cannot quite outshine the *Mirror* Group, recent purchasers of Amalgamated Press, either for number or diversified interest of magazine titles. Among their two score or so, before they took over Hultons' ten, Odhams

could already claim some degree of catholicity with *Mother, Hairdressers' Journal* and *Mickey Mouse Weekly* (now *Zip*), but what is this compared with the *Mirror's* rich new harvest of forty-three Amalgamated Press publications (three since sentenced to death), which include *Girls' Crystal*, *Knockout* and the *Sexton Blake Library*, not to mention seven starting with the word *Woman*, *Playhour* and *Oracle*? There are also, of course, the vest-pocket empires, houses that publish three or four periodicals, such as Stevens (*Smart Novels*, wanting "stories of stirring romance, about twenty-two thousand words") or the Stratford Press (*Muck Shifter and Public Works Digest*: "articles on earth moving, payment varies"). I forgot the *Mirror's* partner, *Reveille*, whose poster last week was "FRILLY BLOOMERS KILLED PROPHET."

You Can't Win

THE start of the Flat seems to be the time to pass on a warning overheard the other day in the street. A stout prosperous-looking man on the other side of the pavement declared to his companion that even he couldn't make any money out of racing, although he had "contax with the underworld." He added with considerable false modesty "And I s'pose I know every scum that's worth knowin' . . ."

No Joke

THE Assistant Postmaster-General's assurance that simulated news scare broadcasts shall never go out again,

after the alarm caused by the notorious I.T.A. affair in February, poses a problem for planners in the Government's information services. If they ever have to put out a real news scare broadcast they will have to begin by explaining that it isn't a play.

Permanent Exhibition

LAST week's *Comédie Française* farce got more space under gossip than under criticism, and much play was made with the scintillating first-night audience, which included the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret in the front row of the circle. It was odd that no one drew attention to the behaviour of the lesser celebrities immediately before the three rises of the curtain, when they stood in their dozens in the stalls gangway and gaped at the Royal pair until the lights went down. Does this always happen? I don't know. Royal first nights are a rarity with me. But if it does, Royalty must get some rum ideas about audience behaviour, and at the same time envy those inmates of Regent's Park who occasionally make the headlines by putting a paw through the bars and knocking the grin off someone's face.

Vicious Spiral

WORLD population figures rose by 47,000,000 last year, according to a U.S. estimate. Defence planners everywhere are beginning to wonder whether they'll ever have enough H-bombs.

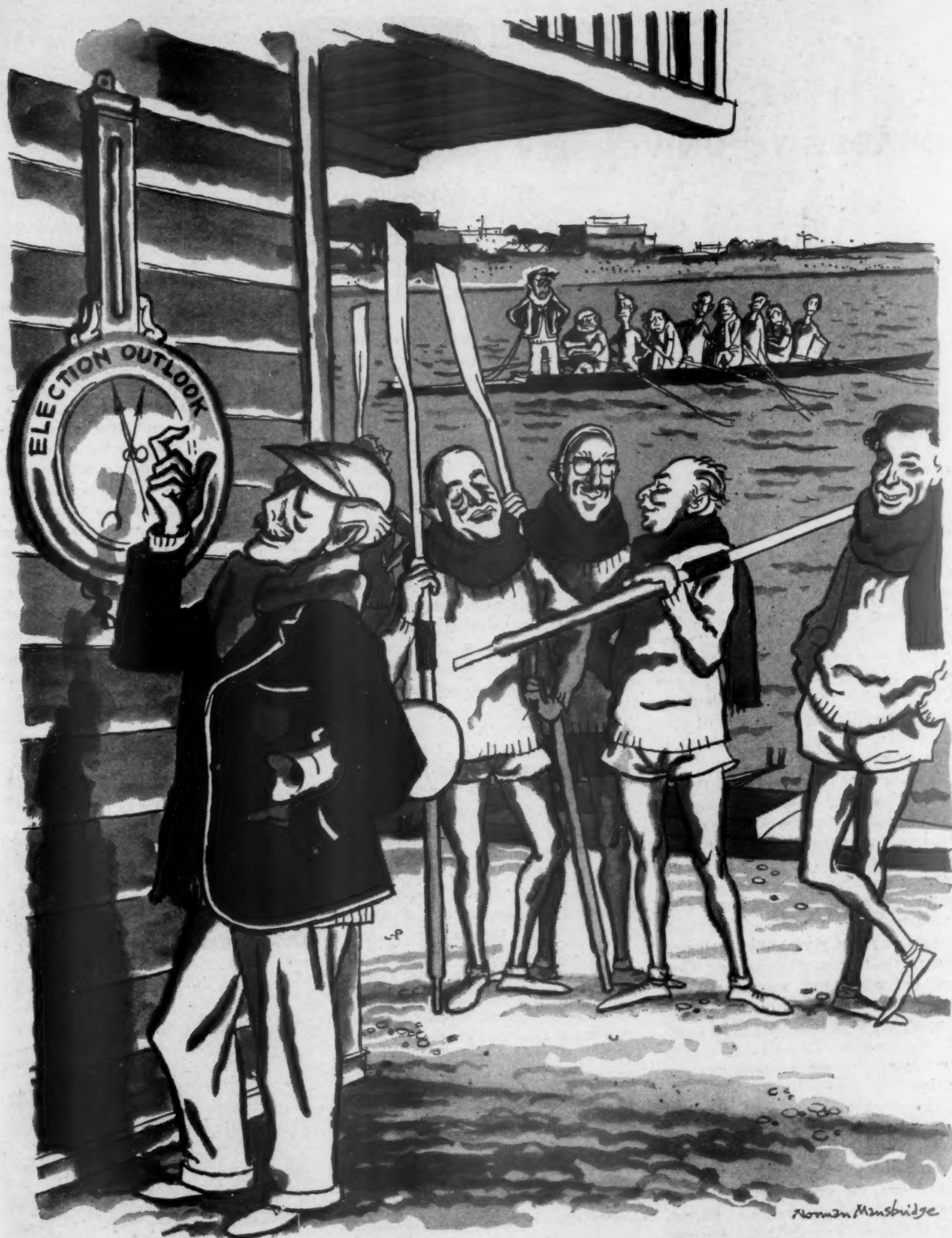
Pass Along the Kiosk, Please

WHEN University College, London, broke the world kiosk cramming record by packing eighteen students into a telephone booth, using the triple-layer technique, "about one hundred people" are said to have watched the event. (Next day the record was re-broken by Hatfield Technical College.) What was not made clear in newspaper reports was that most of the spectators were members of the Ministry of Transport, seeking evidence that the proposed new relief Underground from Victoria to Walthamstow was by no means a necessity as yet. — MR. PUNCH



SPORTING PRINTS

CHRISTINE TRUMAN, by Hewison,
is on page 437



CRADLE TO UNIVERSITY



6 Children's Reading

By MARCUS MORRIS

THE basic truth is simple and awful enough. Children, in spite of educationists, teachers and a fair proportion of parents, are human. They are not to be treated like, for example, women: as a special category of creation. Children are only different from grown-ups in being less so. They just happen to have lived for a shorter time than the rest of us. The average child is mixed-up, ambitious, unconfident, obstinate, idealistic, realistic, sentimental, tough—just like us.

But the reluctance is widespread to accept that they belong to the same species. The caterers for children are determined to make a mystique out of what is really a simple matter. (Some caterers, one might hazard a guess, are under pressure. The promoters of Children's TV can hardly be doing so of their own free will. They must have discovered by now what their little viewers think of it.)

To ask what children should read is like asking what children should be. Both questions are irrelevant and only produce symptoms of acute frustration in the inquirer. The latter is usually an unmarried lady or an idealist. Like good realists, we start from what children are (see *supra*); and from what children want to read. This is obvious and, therefore, normally ignored. They want to read what we want to read, at a slightly—very slightly—more primitive level. They want violence with as much blood as possible. They want adventure, excitement, romance, mystery and intrigue.

They want them in varying quantities and differing degrees of every stage in the journey from the play-pen to the quadrangle. Indeed, these things largely are the journey—the paving-stones of adolescence, to coin a phrase. And they provide a safe enough foothold

for the child who treads freely and eagerly. It is the already delinquent who slips between the cracks. The normal child needs no clucking adult to tell him to walk warily.

Any of these things can be served up either as what is called "true-life" material or as fiction. At the time of going to press, fact has slightly the edge over fantasy. This is a gloomy or encouraging piece of information according to your state of health, or your view of "true-life." The current passion for war-stories is a sign of something—probably the need of escape from our peaceful modern world; or could it be second-generation nostalgia? But it is an interesting moral question whether a real or an imaginary war is more improving for the growing mind.

Any attempt to deny to children these things—adventure, etc.—is doomed to failure. If we want (and I suppose we do) to educate them we must do it in those terms. Those teachers are bores who de-gut, de-blood, debilitate history, literature, religion and even biology. The children, refusing to be improved, stay awake at night to watch adult television. This is not a modern development. (See E. S. Turner's *Boys Will be Boys*, *passim*; read Dr. Spock; or consult your local analyst.) Children are tougher than we think. They always were. They are also growing, curious and imaginative. They should be able to find the vitality and robustness they want in their school books and their novels, as well as in their comics. To-day they don't often. Their reading must also give them some idea of what the world is really like—because, little realizing, they want to know. It is the squeamish, obscurantist adults who arouse the more than normal curiosity about the seamy side of life.

A greater frankness would, as usual, be a less dangerous thing.

The essentials for children's reading, therefore, remain the same. These include the ingredient of a dominant hero figure. (All the most successful children's books and strip cartoons are known by the name of the chief character.) Children, like adults, are great hero-worshippers. The hero can be either a self-identification figure or a father-figure. Not a mother-figure, even for girls; and aunts are out, while uncles are very much in. The authority-figure must be carefully handled. Never a schoolmaster—but a sports-mistress, yes indeed. How could one have a girls' school story without the rescue of the popular sports-mistress? Detectives have always been with us, but until our times, private. The policeman hero is a modern arrival, and one suspects this is some sort of important social phenomenon. The scientist is only just ceasing to be comic or crazy or both—is this related to the new concern for "true-life"?—and is in danger of becoming smug and pompous. In general, official authority-figures are best left alone.

The motivation is, as always: for boys, adventure, conquest, triumph (of the good, children much prefer it); for girls,



the same plus romance (either sex). For girls, the rule is *personalize*. Boys will search for hidden treasure in the jungle; girls will search for a long-lost uncle.

The order of preference is not changing much either. Space-fiction is slightly down on a few years ago—in deference to reality, one might suppose, but more likely because so much of it is tripe. War is slightly up. Generalizing, and taking all age-groups—which one has no right to do—the order might be:

- Boys.
1. Cowboys
 2. War
 3. Space-fiction
 4. "Real" heroes
 5. Detectives
 6. Science

(Note: Not school stories. State schools have not yet developed *esprit de corps*.)

- Girls.
1. Horses
 2. Nurses
 3. Air Hostesses
 4. Ballet dancers
 5. "Real" heroines
 6. Career stories

(Note: Girls are less interested in real-life but more interested in careers.)

That, roughly, is what they read. But why should they read at all? There is a reason, but it is not the one which has put the halo around reading. The critics of the comics, television, cinema (of almost everything that children enjoy) start with the assumption that reading is an end in itself, and the main end of education. This is presumptuous, patronizing, and false.

There is nothing sacred about the printed word as such. It is the means to an end. We read—or we should read if we weren't badgered about it—(a) because we enjoy it, or (b) because we learn something through it. But we learn through other things too—pictures,



for example. The conventional alphabetical signs we use have no innate superiority over pictures. Children enjoy pictures, and quite right too. They are easier than words; they tell them more; they stimulate their imagination. It is astonishing to realize that there are a curious set of people who prefer to read nonsense in words rather than a good story in pictures. Of all the ways to acquire knowledge of the world and of life reading words is probably the dumbest, slowest and the most expensive.

To those who may raise an eyebrow at this self-evident pronouncement, one would enjoy putting a few searching questions about what *their* knowledge of the world is and just how they got it. Someone or other has said—I believe in China, where they evidently have a better sense of proportion about these things—"A picture is worth one thousand words." It would be interesting to calculate how many hours of continuous reading would be needed to convey the same amount of information conveyed by one hour of film or television.

If we had any sense—and we have—we obviously want children to read and enjoy books. Then we must change our tune and stop being superior. Most children don't enjoy reading. It is the minority to whom it comes easily; who have met inspired teachers and exciting books. They are lucky. But what of the majority—don't they count? They have been given the wrong books at the wrong time, and their interest has been destroyed. A dull book makes reading itself seem dull.

Or they have been taught without

imagination. Or they have no books at home. Or Dad doesn't read a book and he's doing all right. So they leave school able—just about—to read; but not with any real enjoyment. It means an effort and they give it up. There are other things to enjoy. And by the time they get their call-up papers they are back on comics.

If we want them to read, then—

(1) They must be given a motive for reading—a true motive. You cannot pretend to them that it's those who read most who get on in life. They won't believe you.

(2) They must be excitingly taught.

(3) It must be made easy for them. That means the right material at the right level at the right time. And that means a good many pictures, vigorous and exciting, to whet their appetite and stimulate their imagination. Better a picture-book than no book at all. Better an "illustrated classic" than no classic at all. Better a strip-cartoon Bible than no Bible at all.

There is this comfort—that things are getting better. We are becoming a literate nation. But it may be due more to the *Daily Mirror* than to anything else—except of course the comics.



Other contributors to this series will be:

The Rev. SIMON PHIPPS
R. G. G. PRICE
PAUL REILLY
C. H. ROLPH
ALAN ROSS
JOHN TAYLOR
SIR JOHN WOLFENDEN

Staying Married

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

WHILE the country stands locked in ugly controversy over the British Medical Association's shilling booklet *Getting Married* (no longer offered for sale) I have decided to issue a second wholesome tract for the entire family, this time on the business of *staying married*. To some people the very word "marriage" is invested with a penumbral suspicion of licence, for marriage comes straight from the French *mariage*, and we all know, don't we, how utterly Gallic and Frenchified things can be when they come straight from the French.

Nevertheless in this tract I shall face facts. Marriage—try to think of it with two "rs"—is of course a union of two minds, a fusion of personalities in harmony. *But there is also the physical side to be considered.*

Let us be shamelessly frank and admit right away that the physical side implies courtship. Yes, courtship. There is nothing wrong with courtship in marriage provided that the washing-up has been done first and that both parties are lukewarm about the evening's radio programmes.

To court, the husband should first

make purely verbal advances. A comment or two on the quality of the baked beans, toast or coffee often works wonders. The wife relaxes, mellows, and finds that her knitting needles begin to click with unaccustomed ease and assurance. Another useful opening is "Have you just had your hair permed, dear?" A wife, for inscrutable reasons, regards this as flattering.

The best light for courting maritally by is the glow given off by the television receiver. Its advantages are manifold. It is soft, restlessly changing like the moods of the sea, cheap, flattering (most people look their best when seen only in fleeting moments of under-exposure), and picturesque. And of course the stuff being emitted may be vaguely interesting or entertaining.

Some husbands court by drawing their chairs nearer to the wife's chair. This should be done gradually, tentatively—never demonstratively or possessively. Nothing puts the wife out of countenance so quickly as a single sudden, bold stroke with the chair. The aim should be to arouse the wife's interest in chair-moving very gently, insidiously, unconsciously, so that she is aware only of the susurrations of castors on carpet.

Care should be taken, however, to ensure that your intentions are clearly understood. Many a chair has been moved wife-wards only for the occupant to have his hopes dashed by a stinging rebuke. "All right, Mr. Selfish," says the lady of your choice, "go on, hog the picture. I'm nobody!" I am not saying that your manoeuvre with the chair should leave you in an *inferior* viewing position. Not at all. What I do say is that you should do nothing to destroy the atmosphere of warmth and affection which is the essential prerequisite of successful courtship.

It may, for example, be practicable to approach the wife's chair from the *other side*, so that while you in no way interfere with her line of vision you achieve a definite advantage by reason of surprise and the thrill evoked by dramatic physical transposition.

Dial MARples



"But I don't like to hang up—the operator is so friendly."



"Just because you know my Christian name, Mr. Williams, you needn't think I'm a call girl."



"Mine are blue, as a matter of fact. What colour are yours?"



"Oh, Mavis has gone baby-sitting for one of our subscribers."



"If we can't sneak in by tea-time we'll watch TV instead."

But the stratagem is fraught with difficulty. The chair has to be pushed backwards several feet in order to clear the back of the wife's chair—moved backwards, sideways and then forward in a track shaped like a soccer goalpost: and the whole operation has to be completely noiseless.

All I can say by way of recommendation is that true courtship is well worth a bit of trouble. You will be well rewarded for your pains once the chairs are adjacent: as you turn up the brightness control your whole being will be suffused with an indefinable satisfaction.

Some married couples indulge in marital kissing, and provided this practice is restricted to arrivals and departures I can see absolutely nothing wrong with it. *Au contraire*, labial fraternization can at times be comforting and pleasurable. Unquestionably the safest form of kissing is the *baiser de départ*: the husband pops a last morsel of toast into his mouth, detaches *The Times* from the marmalade pot, reaches

for his hat and brief-case and *kisses his wife*. The best results are obtained when the wife assists the husband by leaning slightly forward across the toast-rack (*not* the hot-plate) and purses her lips. At the moment of contact the eyes should be closed and the toast pushed to one side of the jaw.

There is nothing particularly passionate about this momentary embrace, but with practice it can be made wonderfully stimulating and evocative. The husband will savour it for most of his journey to town, and until he gets his pipe going smoothly the nectar of coffee and buttered toast will be a constant reminder of the girl he has left behind him.

Finally I should like to mention the subject of love-letters. Ladies often suffer a rude shock when confronted for the first time with the realities of matrimony. It is all so different from their expectations. They have been taught—by silly romantic novels, films and so on—that marriage conforms to a rosy dream of nuptial bliss and conubial excitement. And suddenly, once

the knot has been tied, they find that the love-letters stop coming. For a few months the young bride feels frustrated, disenchanted. True, she still runs with same old zest to answer the postman's knock, but each day brings only a heavier burden of disappointment and anguish.

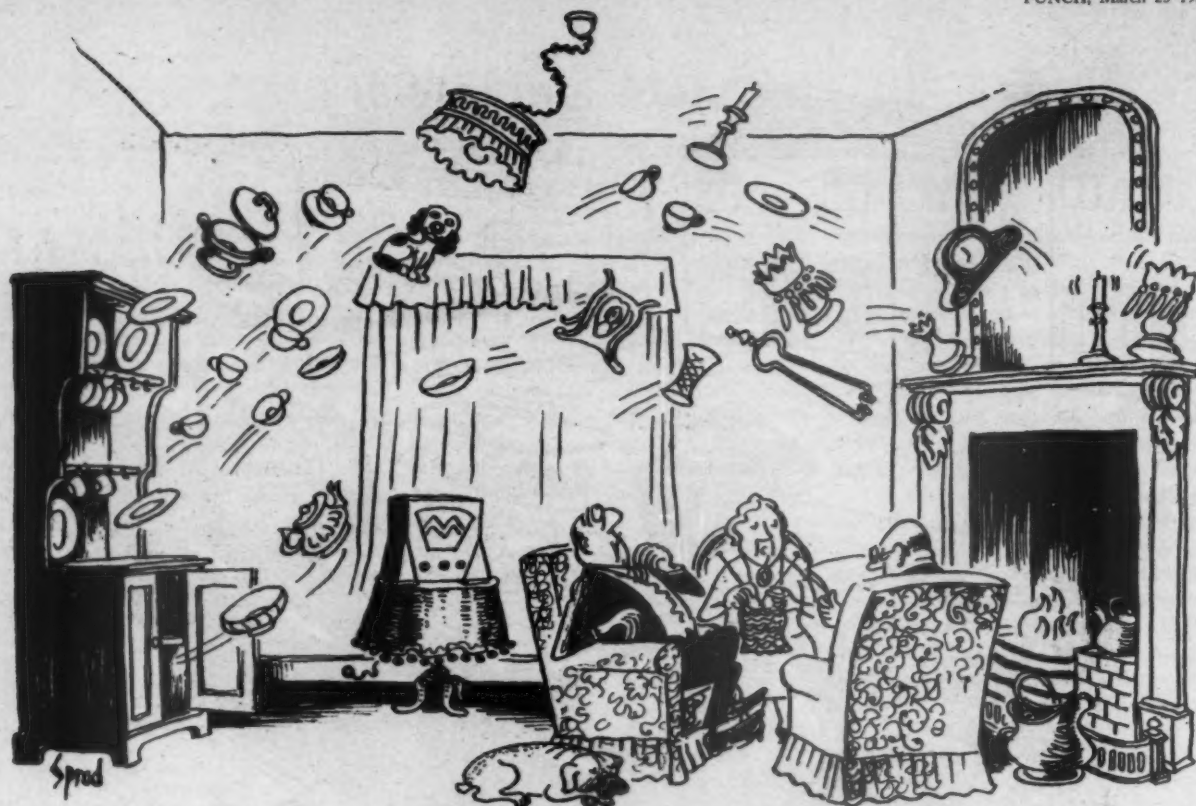
It is all so stupid.

The husband should realize that courtship does not end with marriage, that his wife *needs* constant written reminders of his affection and passion, that a *billet-doux* can engender marital felicity more easily than dozens of silly old pats on the back and rugger-tackle embraces.

To the husband then I say "Get a good ball-point, preferably one that writes purple and in corner seats, and get into the habit of scribbling the odd sonnet on your way to the office."

Give Love its head. Let yourself go. Make a success of marital courtship. Stay married.

Coming shortly: Problems of the Middle-aged Couple



"Actually we have two poltergeists; one throws and the other catches."

Astrological Warfare By H. F. ELLIS

THE annual conference of Dr. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party—which corresponds, I suppose, to what goes on over here at Blackpool and Margate in the early autumn—has been postponed until May. So much is fact. What is *believed* ("reliably understood" is the phrase in my newspaper) is that the real reason for the postponement is the advice given to the Ceylon Premier by his astrologers that March was a most unsuitable month for a conference. The planetary indications were that an immediate meeting would result in a split in the party.

I don't know anything about planetary indications, nor how such remote bodies, so hidebound in their movements, can peer beneath the surface of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and perceive its frangibility in March. But I can see the uses of astrology—political astrology. I believe we could do with it here. Or augury, if you like to put the business on a broader base. I don't

care myself whether the omens are taken from the stars or from the flight of birds, so long as some kind of machinery exists for stopping people doing things without having to produce reasoned arguments. The Romans of the earlier Republic, who are generally considered to have been a sound lot, conducting their affairs pretty advantageously on the whole and by no means given to whimsy, made great political use of augury—in fact there was just about nothing you could do without asking the augurs whether to-day was a good day for it; and if they said No, that was the end of it. We might do worse than follow their example.

The feature of the Roman system was its simplicity and its modesty. There was none of that tiresome claim to foretell the future which is such a weakness of prophets and astrologers; no attempt to tell people, as those hopeless Greek oracles did, that *if* they took such and such a line such and such consequences would follow. The augurs

simply said Yes or No, generally No. You decided what you wanted to do—choose a dictator, it might be, or fight a battle or marry a patrician or allot some public land—and then you went to the augurs and asked them whether the auspices were for or against. The reply you got, after the entrails had been inspected or the chickens fed or some other pleasing byplay, was a clean-cut decision, with no damnfool reasons added. "It's not on," the augurs would say, and left it at that, though they might, I suppose, if they thought it worth while, advise you to try again next week. If Dr. Bandaranaike had consulted a Roman augur, instead of those local astrologers, he would have got his postponement just the same, without that unnecessary chatter about splitting the party, which simply puts ideas into people's minds.

The advantages to British political life of a College of Augurs on the Roman model need no stressing. When all has been thrashed out in Cabinet and

Commons and some portentous decision has been arrived at, how admirable to have a body of elders who simply take a look at the pigeons in Trafalgar Square and say "No." How splendid a check on the restless inclination of Parliament to be always inaugurating and setting things in motion. The House of Lords, even in its heyday, was nothing to this; for their Lordships were obliged to argue, and argument breeds counter-argument, ill-will, outcries and, ultimately, reform. The beauty of an augural check in the constitution is that it leaves nothing to be said. You cannot argue about entrails. One of the strongest arguments to be advanced in favour of a College of Augurs is that its decisions, on the gravest matters, could not raise a cheep out of *The Times* or even the *Manchester Guardian*. Augury would also be an extremely effective way, and much cheaper than a public inquiry, of putting a stop to power stations at Dungeness and oil refineries in the Solent.

But it is, perhaps, in international matters that the new body would especially shine. One of the great stumbling-blocks in the way of a Summit Conference is the difficulty of agreeing on an agenda, yet we have to keep on trying for fear we should be thought to be inflexible and opposed to negotiation. Given a College of Augurs we could agree with ease on any agenda the Russians cared to propose and at the last moment just not go. It may be childish and irresponsible of me, but if I live to see the day when Mr. Macmillan sends Mr. Khrushchev a cable reading "Can't come. Three lapwings seen flying from right to left," I shall feel that life has not been entirely in vain. The Russians will say that we are superstitious, or hypocritical, or both; but they say that about us already, do they not?

Of course the actual constitution of the College is a matter of some difficulty. I do see that. Augurs wield a lot of power, as the Romans found, and need to be incorruptible, wise, patriotic, peace-loving, deeply versed in constitutional lore, balanced, courageous, and able, if only for form's sake, to inspect entrails without nausea. The Romans had nine of them in the College's greatest days, but perhaps in the circumstances we could get along with three. Would anyone care to send me suggestions for the other two?

Pillory

Readers' reactions to A. P. H.'s request for reasonable grievances

LOSING THE ASHES

The fact that most heavy smokers are pitiful neurotics does not mean that they have no right to live, even to smoke. But war must be declared on their belief that it is the non-smokers who are freaks. If one says to them that, living in the stuff, they can never know how nasty the smell of someone else's cigarette is, they shrug as if to say "Well, take it up yourself and you won't notice." I was about to sit down in the Underground the other day next to a woman who had piled some books and parcels on to my proposed seat. She moved them courteously on to her lap, leaving only a pile of ash from about three cigarettes, which she had evidently been tapping automatically among her parcels. This, I suppose, she regarded as having no longer anything to do with her.

EDWARD PARSHALL, S.W.3

UNHOLY ROLLERS

They waddle, or more usually, she waddles slowly, all over the pavement, rolling like a ship in heavy water. To

overtake, you, walking behind, tack to starboard. She, often broad in the beam, lists to the same quarter. You trim sail to port. She does too. So, though the pathway is wide and you are in a hurry to catch the train to Samarkand or Shoeburyness, you can never pass this obstacle; it is the fallacy of the hare never catching the tortoise in the mathematical trick problem come true. Train and temper, all is lost.

HAROLD GREAVES, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

HE'S AGAINST IT

The use by the B.B.C. of the word "against" in place of "versus" is a sop no doubt to the "masses" who are supposed to shy at anything supposedly classic . . . "Tottenham Hotspur against Bolton," says the miserable reader who surely must protest inwardly but hasn't the courage to rebel . . . Walk into any suburban public bar and take a look at the Darts Club notice board—"Kings Arms v. Princes Head" not only looks right—it's *English*: "Middlesex against Surrey" isn't—and never, never will be.

W. A. BREWIS, S.W.14



"Now that we're all square on hospitality, what d'you say we call it a day?"

THESE random pointers are addressed to unaccompanied British lady tourists planning their first holiday in Italy. Whatever else they may encounter, they are bound to come across Italian men; and their triple state of being unaccompanied, British, and ladies, calls for advance information on the subject.

General. Italian men are extremely proud of their country and inordinately interested in women. When a foreign woman crosses their field of vision their basic hunting instinct mingles with a broadly interpreted patriotic urge to serve their country's tourism, and the chase is on. An Italian trying to pick up an English girl in a café on the Piazza Garibaldi is only partly acting as a private citizen. Deep down he sees himself as part of the landscape, a tiny,

FOR
WOMEN



from his own countrywomen, won't be hurt. Worse still, he won't notice he's been rebuffed.

The Bolder Smoulder. A widespread national technique, particularly disconcerting to British beginners. It's a certain gaze, focused on the victim

discovered his true Beatrice, the one and only woman in the world without whose smile he'll crumple up, sigh and die. He won't. The expression, complicated as it sounds, is turned on and off like the kitchen light. Rewarding to ladies starved for recognition, as long as they don't glance back a moment later only to see that the Smoulder has already been transferred to someone else. Can only be done with dark eyes and lashes. The same expression in Nordic eyes would only suggest that their owner has seen a particularly unpleasant ghost.

Opening Gambits. Transparent but varied, none too painfully obvious. "Haven't we met before?" is definitely out unless followed by "in a previous life, perhaps?" Most opening gambits are personal and therefore incalculable. Here, however, are a few typical samples.

(a) *The Classicist.* Lurks around museums and famous monuments, concealing his intents behind Culture. May strike up conversation by offering to correct your guide-book that contains misleading information on just what the Etruscans did at that particular spot. May stop you in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence with "Don't you think I look exactly like Michelangelo's 'David'?" May even beg you to talk about Roman Britain. If you can't, he will.

(b) *The Anglophil.* Is mad keen on anything English and knows as much about Britain as our own Teddies, with their Italian-style suits and shoes, know about Italy. His admiration is either based on the fact that English women remain slim while Italians grow fat, or else somebody he knew had been a P.O.W. in Britain and had loved it. Asks questions like "In summer is the fog hot?" or "Do you have macaroni in

Beginner's Guide to Italian Men

lively, noisy atom of Eternal Italy which, after all, the foreign visitor had come to discover—in fact he becomes an ingredient infinitely less valuable than, say, the Ponte Vecchio, but just as typical and essential for the understanding of the whole. A rebuff may hurt the hospitable patriot in him. The private wolf, traditionally used to snubs

for the few seconds it takes to pass her in the street (also practised by men on cycles or scooters, but in those circumstances it doesn't last long enough to have any effect). The Bolder Smoulder is a gaze of intense passion and longing. The eyes grow grave and narrow, the lips tighten, the jaw sets; for a moment the Smoulderer looks as if he had just

Continuing Our Great New Romantic Serial

The Story So Far

Instalment III: The Search

Even had it been she and Sally behind the anonymous letters and the sinister episode of the delinquent with the bread-van, Jasmyne Phrayle, blonde orphaned one-time flower arranger with brows and a dour widowed Uncle Jem she does not now keep house for, would still have quitted her Mayfair beauty salon job after a week, for obviously Mme. Belle Toujours, alias the red-headed Cheryl who stole Sally's fiancé, is not the same Mayfair beautician whom Gordon McTavish, rising young doctor, said he was friendly with when Jasmyne dragged him from the pothole. Jasmyne trudges from beauty salon to beauty salon seeking

a glimpse of this man she is convinced is her destiny. Mark Hillcombe, fit again after the dome fell on him, gallantly proposes at Ascot where Jasmyne is breathtaking in grey muslin. Besides her dear "Grandpa Twiddles" she has a new friend in the delinquent's guardian, Colonel Stuart, an elder badger-watcher of shy charm. One evening while in her tiny flat thinking wistfully of the fortune that will be hers at twenty-one and was the cause of hard-headed Mat's advances, Jasmyne hears a tap at the door and with beating heart slips on a new casual almond shirtwaister. She knows it cannot be Sally, who is still in prison.

Next Week: One Magic Night

England?"—calculated silly questions that are bound to provoke a reply. After all, tourists are patriotic too.

(c) *The Democrat*. Probably the night porter of the hotel, a boatman or a waiter who pursues the lady tourist, making it quite clear that his lowly station in life mustn't be allowed to stand between them. A brief investigation normally reveals that his brother (cousin, friend, etc.) is at that precise moment lucratively employed in London as a pizza-maker and that he, the democrat, is thinking of joining him over there.

(d) *The Marrying Kind*. Picks up and promptly proposes. Doesn't wait for answer, launches into plans at once. Is reverent, ardent and won't be chased away. Sees you off at the end of your holiday, with tears in his eyes, clutching a time-table on which he has already worked out his own impending visit to Britain. "Please regard me as your betrothed" are his last words. He never turns up; doesn't even write a postcard.

Prevention. No foolproof method of protection is known. A stony gaze helps. On no account try to explain that you don't wish to be pursued and that you don't understand Italian. As your pursuer won't understand English the next thing you'll know will be that he's busy teaching you Italian so you can tell him why you want to be left alone.

P.S.—LOCAL WOMEN. From the age of six upwards they sulk at everybody, especially at men. A touch of sympathy isn't out of place. After all, to live permanently among such volatile, uncontrollable men can't be very funny for them.

— ANN CHRISTOPHER

Growing Familiar

MY baby knew me as a face
Suspended over her in space.

My toddler knew me to the knees
As nylon eights and court-shoe threes.

My child of half a dozen Springs
Best knew me by my apron-strings.

Now that our sizes are the same
She knows me by my Christian name.

— HAZEL TOWNSON

A New Phase in an Old War

THE hundred-years-old war of invasion by women into masculine preserves has reached the point when all but the Athenæum and the pulpit have fallen; but no one seems to have observed that a new phase has begun in which the men are fighting back by invading feminine preserves.

In 1920 *Punch* pictured a male mannequin show: "Why not take a leaf out of the ladies' book of fashion, and let the tailors have dress parades of the latest designs?" It was, of course, a flight of facetious fancy, a suggestion *pour rire*. Such a question asked in earnest at that time would have received many answers, one of which would have been that only "dagos" would be male models—dago being a period term applied to paid dancing partners, lounge lizards, and the like.

More than thirty years on, in 1953, the Men's Fashion Council, composed of Savile Row tailors, gave its first live presentation; and since then dress shows for men have become as commonplace as wine-tastings for women. Moreover, male modelling has become a highly rewarded profession, into which

only clean-limbed, rugged, Anglo-Saxon types can hope to enter. At Grosvenor House last week, Simpsons of Piccadilly held a fashion show attended by ambassadors and members of the Diplomatic Corps and Trade Commissions, to introduce the 1959 *International Style* for men: "Britain's export answer to the Continental influence."

It was, to go back again to the language of the 'twenties, a cock-and-hen parade; and, as in nature, the cocks were more gorgeously got up than the hens. Pleasingly elegant as were the women's clothes, with a quiet casual style, it was the men's which drew most applause, used the most interesting materials, and showed the most new ideas. Some of these, particularly in the sports and resort clothes, were clearly looted from dressmaking sources. Highly significant were some twin sets for men, attractive, practical, and becoming. With men wearing the twin set, the bastion of virtuous British womanhood has indeed been stormed. There only remain our pearls.

— ALISON ADBURGHAM



"... Everton, two ... Spurs, one ... Arsenal, three ... Manchester United, two ..."

Break, Break, Break . . .

By ALEX ATKINSON

IT was not until the year 1965 that we in these islands came to realize that the pattern of life in a highly industrialized country must inevitably resolve itself into a brilliant kaleidoscope of advertising interrupted fitfully by Natural Breaks. Before that, history shows that we had muddled along hardly caring whether a woman had a refrigerator or not so long as she was able to hear the songs of Hugo Wolf from time to time, or yearn for Yul Brynner, or play hockey, or wallow in the reactionary fancies of Shakespeare, Osborne, Rattigan or Behan. As a matter of fact, up to the very end of 1964 books were still actually being published which contained more rubbish¹ than advertising copy: the real turning-point in the stiff-cover field was probably *Corsets and Kitchenware*, which sold half a million copies. This work (now a collector's piece) contained two hundred and fifty pages, but even then only three-fifths of it was devoted to serious advertising: the Natural Break (a treatise on Rembrandt) occurred between pages 74 and 175, and seems absurdly long by to-day's standards.²

But those were early days. It was not long before the opportunities for a Meaningful Life were grasped with both hands, and the way made clear for real Progress. To-day, with a House of Commons manned by Ad-men, and a Cabinet of superannuated P.R.O.s, we are perhaps inclined to take the Good Life for granted and to forget the bold, imaginative spade-work put in by such pioneering bodies as the I.T.A. It was probably the far-sighted planning of this latter organization in the late 'sixties which was mainly responsible for all that followed. If you are old enough you may recall some of the earlier, tentative gropings towards an ideal TV programme—the arguments as to the proper balance between Entertainment and Culture (or Advertising, as it was originally called), the experiments in Subliminal Inculcation (a timid, retrograde method which would have put

Ad-Culture permanently on the defensive); the gradual wooing of actors, writers and technicians from the dwindling, ill-paid field of Entertainment into the happy ranks of the N.A.P.C.G.;³ and that first, splendid, poll-topping programme in what came to be called the neo-Classical style—three and a half consecutive hours of animated cartoons about sparking plugs, detergents, backache pills and laxatives, with a Natural Break of five minutes in which a honeymoon couple from Harlow New Town correctly guessed the first word of the first line in Kipling's *If* and were given a fully-automatic house in East Grinstead and a cheque for two hundred and fifty thousand pounds each. (The orchestra in this Sop was conducted by Eric Robinson, on loan from the B.B.C., which at that time still had eight regular viewers, all able to read and write.)

It was shortly after this that the great Natural Break controversy began. On the one hand there were the viewers who objected to the sexy soap-ad ballets being interrupted at the end of each movement by thirty seconds of "Dotto" or News; on the other hand there were those who maintained that such breaks relieved the emotional tension, reducing the risk of orgies in suburban sitting-rooms and giving Mum time to make a pot of nourishing Gulp ("Made with Freshly Sieved Vitamins!"). This controversy was never fully resolved, for even to-day there are elderly viewers who object to having to wait until 4 a.m. for their two-minute instalment of the *Gun Law Spot the Tune Ward Ten Quiz Show*.

During the mid-'seventies I.T.A.'s revolutionary techniques began to make themselves felt in other aspects of what for want of a better word is still referred to as Life. The first experimental commercials were introduced into an Old Vic production of *Twelfth Night*, in which Malvolio himself brought the house down with a blank verse ad for deckle-edged notepaper. Sandwich-board men made their appearance at Twickenham, weaving in and out among the players and delighting the crowd with that skill and daring which to-day is taken for granted as an integral part

of the game. The Derby of 1979 was the first Ad-Derby to be run at Epsom, each horse pulling a wagonette mounted with a tableau representing a particular product.⁴ (The horses were not dispensed with until 1988.) Around this time, too, conductors at the Albert Hall began to pelt the promenaders with pamphlets and free samples of genuine imitation pre-brewed coffee. Advertising jingles (or, as we now say, Cultural Motets) became the rage at night-club cabarets. Pubs, clubs and all public buildings were hooked up to the Central Selling Bureau Network, so that listening to the non-stop screeching of slogans became an accepted part of leisure-time activities. County cricket grounds were turned into Ad-Stadiums, in which opposing teams of eleven highly-trained barkers vied with one another in selling bubble-cars and fully-fashioned stockings to the crowd, and on the second day of the 1978 Test at Lord's England were all out for six cars, two motor-bikes and a pair of blush-rose 15-denier stretch nylons. In 1991 there occurred the famous outbreak of Buying Mania. This mysterious malady, which swept across the whole of Western Europe, caused millions of people between the ages of seven and eighty to rush gibbering from shop to shop, buying up everything they could lay their hands on. Some carried banners saying "We Want Custard," and thirty-four favourite ad-singers were suffocated by crazed, adoring mobs. A contemporary cave-drawing shows a frenzied teenager in her bedroom. She is evidently in the last throes of the madness, frothing at the mouth as she scrabbles among a vast heap of egg-whisks, tins of paint, ball-point pens, jellies, dehydrated cakes, shampoos, soft-centre chocolates, hair-dryers, bars of soap, tins of soup and bottles of orangeade. According to the caption her last words were "I want to marry a washing-machine!"

It is fitting that we should pay tribute to such pioneers. But for them, our life to-day would be very different. And there's no need to look so wistful about it.

¹ Fiction, biography, etc.

² Compare the recently published four-hundred-page *Toothpaste For All*, in which the Natural Break, or Non-Functional Sop, occupies only half a page, and takes the form of a Potted Course in Advanced Practical Therapeutics.

³ National Advertising and Publicity Chain Gang.

⁴ Records show that Gumidge's Tinned Turnips won at 100-7, the favourite, Mullins's Quick-Frozen Porridge, unseating its tableau at Tattenham Corner



"Odd stockings again!"



VAGUE

There are normally three Vagues—American, British, French. This is the fourth.



EASTER COVER

Formal, elegant, refined, simple, luxurious—a practical evening dress for everyday wear at Court or coming-out ball, by Saprissi. The material is heavy-gauge *toile de Jouy* cut on the bias. The neckline continues all the way round the shoulders, the skirt hangs deeply floor-wards. Matching lipstick and eye-shadow by Lolita.

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by Celia, Marchioness of Caltrap
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Joey Ginsberg writes our short story, *Dust in the Beer*. It will be included in his collection, *Grit, Teeth*, to be published in May



Evelyn Gall contributes *20 Ways with Easter Eggs*, based on his unrivalled experience as a cook in a Cistercian monastery



Celia, Marchioness of Caltrap, writes on diamonds for the office girl—a subject she knows well, having worn diamonds all her life.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Around the markets

BEACHCOMBING IN W.8. An expert writes on the hidden treasures to be found under the stalls of Portobello Road.

Another great short story

SKINT ON THE DILLY—another story from Joey Ginsberg's forthcoming book *Grit, Teeth*.

For younger readers

NEW VAGUE TALENT CONTEST. Prizewinners will be enabled to buy tickets for the Brecht Theatre production of *Orchids on Heat* at special rates.

150 ways of using free gifts
from cornflake packets

Easter eggs for th



*out of the strong
came forth
sweetness*

THE CLOTHES: In the foreground, burnt marmalade tweed with a grease-proof finish for a two-piece City suit, worn over a jersey of unbleached calico edged with silver paper. The high-crowned hat of toast wool is decorated with minute panels of Formica in a spring shade of *vinaigrette*. These colours are reflected in the lining of the ratskin handbag. The shoes are ratskin too, with poker-dice in the hollow heels. In the background, a simple apron of baize, cut boldly from waist to ankle, is worn above black baratheia trousers and a white shirt with a black tie.

THE DUSTBINS: There is a solid foundation of newspaper impregnated in dishwater and oil of various kinds. For relief, eggshells, fishbones, dead flowers, brightly-coloured tins, and bread.

or the privileged

Not chocolate, of course! Surely there's somebody who'd like to give us a real present for Easter? If anyone's listening, here are a few things we'd like.

Flexible pocket-watch designed by Salvador Dali. Ideal for the overcrowded handbag. 175 gns., from good jewellers.

For the angry young deb: the complete works of Colin Wilson, Bill Hopkins and Stuart Holroyd in a darling uniform edition, small 8vo with natural horsehair binding. Complete, £12 10s.

If you like picnics: the *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* pack contains red and black caviar, *pâté de foie gras*, ortolans in aspic, crystallized avocados and pink champagne. 45 gns. (for four) from Crossum and Masewell.

Mink-covered set of fountain-pen and matching pencil. Comes in a neat travelling-case with silver-mounted india-rubber and pocket dictionary. From 85 gns.

Hygienic evening stoles in strong Japanese rice-paper are the very latest and the very chic-est thing. They come in packets of twenty-five; pull out one, and up pops another for your next engagement. From good chemists, 47s. 6d. a packet.

The James Bond shoe-dagger comes in two sizes, long for the sole of your country shoes and short for the heel of your town shoes. Either way, very much smarter than a flick-knife. From Marché Noir, £3.

De-armoured armadillos make the softest, cuddliest pets imaginable! They are strict vegetarians and do not smell or fight. Porridge's have them in their pet store at all prices from 30 gns., according to age and sex.

A Fabergé egg in gold, set with rubies, emeralds, sapphires and diamonds, is timely as well as pretty. Try Christie's, but take your cheque-book.

For the lucky Easter bunny, this three-quarter-length barrel-backed jacket of Ethiopian suede is just the thing to set off the eye-veil of tarantula-web and the matching earrings, necklace and handbag of red sapphires and uranium.



Is Anyone Talking About . . .

Orchids on Heat, which opened at the Brecht (formerly the Queen's) Theatre, Bethnal Green, last month, is Stone Metalwood's fortieth production there, and her one hundred and eighteenth for the Proletarian Stage Cell. Joey Ginsberg wrote the play while he was doing a week's bread-and-water at an approved school. Its theme is boredom, its approach parabolic. It has no script, the cast of twenty-three "ad-libbing" continuously throughout the performance except during the interpolated musical numbers, which are sung and played by a small military band in plain clothes, housed in a soundproof booth up centre. A representative of the Lord Chamberlain attends every performance. (For a special announcement about the Brecht Theatre, see page 102.)

Denzil Cooper moves in terms of fugue. In *Strange*

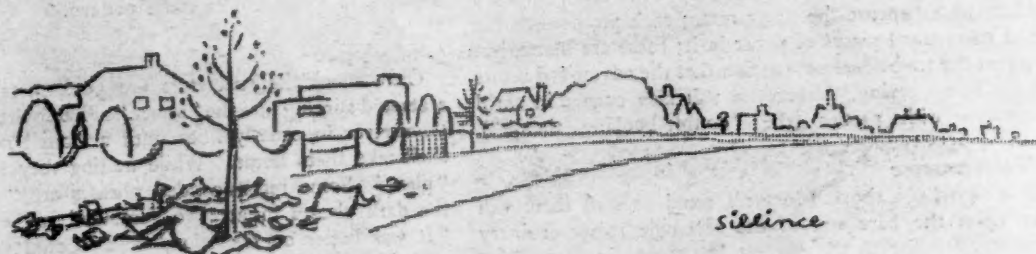
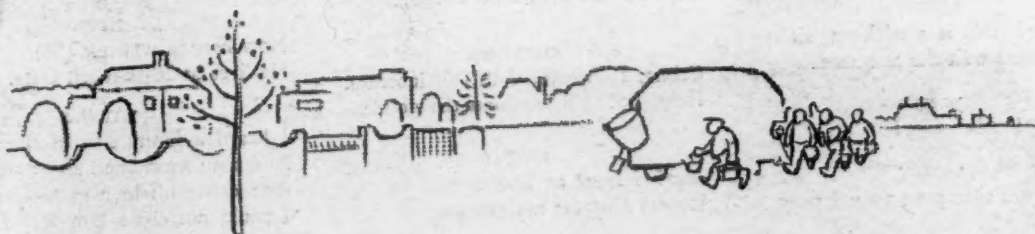
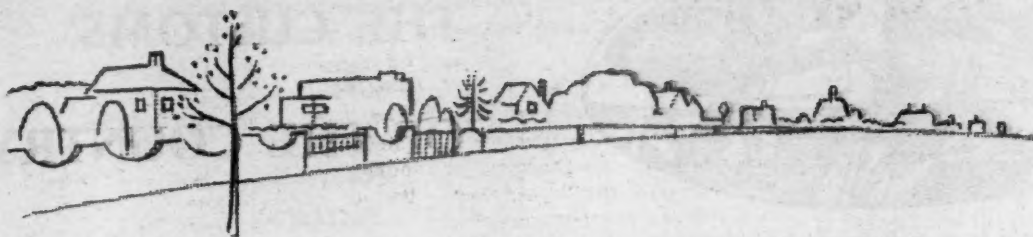
Elephant at the Imperial Palace, God is his subject, leprosy his counter-subject, and their relationships are worked out contrapuntally over three acts with a good deal of refreshing blasphemy. The production by Lindsay Richardson is starkly ineluctable; Barbara Proudfall makes the least of her opportunities as the Lesbian barrister Sally. Sir Laurence Gielgud, making one of his rare appearances as a comic policeman, does not seem completely to gauge the true austerity of the evening, but never mind, it's a collector's performance.

Working with wood-ash and golden syrup, the Hungarian epigone Bela Krapp is showing a discreet variety of canvases at Bent, Brown and Bradbury's Gallery. Truth compels

(continued on pp. 156, 171, 183, 184 and 202.)

MISS STONE METALWOOD





silence



THE CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY

Britain is so rich in old customs that we tend to take them for granted, forgetting that there will come a time when even cheese-rolling loses its hold. Then something will have to step in and fill the breach. It is our task NOW to look round and encourage activities that may one day come in handy. Take folk-plays; what we want is an everyday activity which seems to embody the simple pieties of our day and is already so stereotyped that without much change it can be performed in the streets of Walthamstow. As it might be—

ROBBING-THE-BANK

NEWS

Good people all, my name is NEWS.
To hear my tale do not refuse,
For I a dreadful deed will tell—
An act of violence that befell
In Walthamstow but yesterday.
Lo, JUNIOR proceeds this way.
He lives at 60 Spenlow Green.
His age is summers seventeen.

JUNIOR

I have the key, my stars I thank,
With which I can unlock this bank.

BANDIT

Take heed, this is a stick-up, sir.
We'll in and wait the MANAGER.

JUNIOR

Alackaday! Alackaday!

BANDIT

Sir, will you shut your trap, I pray.

(The rest of the STAFF now enter, mime their respects to each other and their dismay to BANDIT, and form a line with their hands in graceful period attitudes above their heads.)

MANAGER

Good morning, sirs. Now what is this?
CASHIER, inform me what's amiss.

BANDIT

Sir, e'er my patience starts to chafe
Give me the keys unto the safe.

CUSTOMER

Crime, I observe, doth still increase.
Help, ho! I'll summon the police.

BANDIT

Alas! I must no longer stay.
Do not obstruct my getaway.



NEWS

Now here is WITNESS (58)
He lives at 20 Barnard Gate.

WITNESS

I heard a funny sort of shout
And then meseemed a man ran out
And drove off in a motor-car.
I could not chase him very far.

Not that folk-plays ought to be allowed to become the only entertainment of their sort available. If the strenuous efforts of various parties to preserve the living theatre come to anything, our descendants ought to be able to see performed annually on April 23rd, on the site of the National Theatre, an ancient rite entitled—

THE THEATRE ALL-ALIVE-O

1. Prologue

This is chiefly performed by the spectators, who arrange themselves in orderly seated rows occupying four-fifths of the marked-out rectangle and representing the "audience"; they face the remaining one-fifth, the "stage."

During part one there is a Mime of "Usherettes," women in black who dispense the programme; each programme has one or more small pieces of paper in it; these are blank, but represent the traditional notification that the advertised actors will not be appearing. Usherettes will also engage in shrill discussions with parties (the "double-booking theme").

2. Performance

At a sign from the conductor's wand or staff there will enter upon the bare end of the rectangle many ordinary characters familiar to the ancient live-theatre audience, i.e.

bawds, sluts, murderers, police (the "Yardmen" of twentieth-century literature), pervers, drunkards and drug-addicts, who sing of their distaste for life. Ladies are pregnant and young men angry. They move about the stage in slight rearrangements of a more or less static pattern.

3. Epilogue

Once more the spectators are performers, leaving their seats and surging into the "street." There they again arrange themselves in orderly lines until a "bus" not already full shall take them home. While waiting they will discuss the "play." Some recommended phrases are "The man with the dark glasses in act two reminded me of Mr. West," "It was better on television," and "Could you understand what it was all about?"

Other forms of entertainment will no doubt find societies eager to preserve all that is best in them, purging away, perhaps, the grosser dross:

Rules of the Grand and Ancient Order of Test Stars

INITIATION CEREMONY

Before each and every Plenary Session of the Order the Induction Rites shall thus proceed under the direction of the Grand Umpire:

1. The Senior Stars, each accompanied on the left by a Runner (initiate), shall leave the reception room for the dining pitch.
2. All the Stars being assembled, the Prime Skipper shall toss The Coin, shouting "Tails. You bat." After one minute's silence all shall cry "Remember May. Remember Adelaide."
3. The Prime Skipper shall say W. G. Grace, and the Grand Umpire shall shout "Let us play."
4. The Stars shall be seated and pass bread rolls round the table in a clockwise direction. Those sitting in the Slips shall drop one in three. At the moment of delivery the arm shall be straight, and if any Star offend, the Grand Umpire shall cry "Noble" and the offender shall raise one arm vertically above his head, keeping it there throughout the soup.
5. Then shall the Stars partake of the ritual meal: Cold ham, boiled potatoes, beetroot and lettuce; fruit salad; cheddar; coffee. They shall eat in silence. Any appeal for the condiments shall be ignored.
6. The feast over, the Order shall rise as one man and applaud each other. (The Standing Ovation.)
7. The Grand Umpire shall remove the Golden Bails, and the whole Order, led by the Prime Skipper bearing the Scythe, shall proceed to the Ceremony of the Explanation to the Press.

CHILDREN'S GAMES

will continue to engage the attention of busybodies. Perhaps the last living essayist will fret about them occasionally:

ELECTIONEEN will soon be on us. First the whispering at the door and then the nervous knocking. The flatholder strolls smiling to his portal and there stand the children, with shy, eager faces. Bright and clear as satellites on a cold night the little voices ring out in the ancient tune, the time-hallowed words:

*Here we come
Knocking at your door.
Are you against
Or are you for?
Knock, knock, knock.
Tell us at wunst
Are you for
Or are you against?*

and the wise flatholder, he who would ward off Things and Inspectors and Machines that go *BZOINNGK!* in the night, will look kindly on the round black hats and grey masks, and distribute half-pound bits all round. It is a pity that this charming custom is already in the grim clutch of commercialization. Long before Crisstime



Our artist's impression of the winning entry in this year's Hogsback Carshine. A magnificent rally of car-fanciers gathered in the traditional spot on Whitmonday Sunday, and, after eight hours' judging, the prize for the "Best-kept Car"

was awarded to Mr. Gary Spencer of Toronto. Enthusiasts were quick to note that the judges, as in recent years, paid more attention to accuracy of detail than to lavish ornament; the costumes of Mr. Spencer's family were specially commended.

there were a couple of urchins on my doorstep expecting their reward for a mangled tune and the first four lines of the words only.

Little alas, can be done about that, but something can be done to rescue the children's games I used to play. Though their origin may be lost in the mists of time, many of them are still enjoyable. I am often asked about an old game called, variously, *Health*, *Consulting* or *I Got a Leg*. This is how we used to play it:

The players (about a dozen is best) choose a "Doctor." The rest are "Patients" and one of them is designated "First-come." The Patients form a circle, facing inwards, the Doctor standing outside with his back to them. First-come says "I got a leg and its awful bad. I got a leg." Then the player on his left adds another "Symptom" in a disguised voice: "I got a heart and its awful bad. I got a heart and a leg." And so on round the circle. Any patients who gets his symptoms wrong or adds one which is already on the list is "out." The Doctor, when he likes, swings round and says "Next please," and the Patient who is speaking when he says it is out. When someone is out the next Patient starts the game again with a single Symptom. Last Patient in wins.

That is an indoor or warm-weather game. Those who prefer something that will sap a little of their youngsters' energy may like to be reminded of a mysterious but enjoyable pastime, *The Office*.

The more players the merrier. Sides are picked, one group becoming *Whitecollars* and the other *Rushers*. The Rushers mark out a rectangle of ground (size depending on numbers) while the Whitecollars each equip themselves with a piece of paper and a stick, or *broolly*. The Whitecollars then try to cross the Rushers' ground without having paper or broolly snatched from them. Those who succeed can each make one Rusher become a Whitecollar by saying to him "Join my Staff," and those who fail become Rushers. When all the Whitecollars are across they start back, and the game ends when all Rushers have become Whitecollars or vice versa.

Only the other day I found tears in my eyes while I was watching a group of tiny tots playing the old game of *Sex*. For even this ancient pastime is not as safe as it may seem. I think I am right in saying that in my childhood we played it when we were about seven. The average age of the group I was watching must have been three. If this process goes on where will even *Sex* be a century hence?

But, of course, many suitable activities take place on too large a scale for private enterprise. The Government will have to take them in hand—

MEMO: THE SEASON

From: Minister of Works

To: Secretary for Culture

(1) You will no doubt remember the public outcry over "The Season" last year. Several important foreign tourist bureaux also expressed their disappointment. I refuse to let this happen again.

(2) **General: Dances.** It is essential that these should be attended by a percentage of the male sex. If sufficient volunteers are not forthcoming from amateur social societies, professionals will have to be hired.

(3) **Dances: continued.** Far too many socialites last year seemed to think they were only there for the fun

do not believe that our columnists can give of their best if they have nothing to report. Volunteer socialites must be asked for to throw champagne, wear "fancy" dress, de-bag waiters, tar-and-feather passers-by, etc.

(6) **Gossip Columns: continued.** If we are to employ skilled manual artisans to take "photographs" they must be provided with subjects suitable for their art. Dancing, when there is a photographer present, will therefore be of the cheek-to-cheek variety. I enclose a diagram supplied by the V. and A. to show the sort of thing I have in mind.



Right



Wrong

of it. Many left dances when exhausted, long before midnight. The conversation of others was so out of keeping with the festivities as to change their whole tone. You will circulate all cultural societies with a list of permitted subjects: triviality, banality and ignorance are *desiderata*; the list should not be long; repetition is also important.

(4) **General: Gossip Columns.** The fact that these appeal only to a small educated minority must not mislead your department into dismissing them as unimportant; considerable national prestige attaches to the belief that we do this sort of thing better than anyone else. I am informed that last year's cultural mission from Peking reported to their government that the standard of our night reporting corps had fallen so low that they might consider putting their own columnists into the field without fear of ridicule.

(5) **Gossip Columns: continued.** I

(7) **General: Week-ends.** Financial limitations forbid us to hire more than the usual six country houses. You will therefore arrange for the grounds of these to be floodlit all night and work out a shift system whereby double the number of socialites can be "entertained" at week-ends. The hours of sleeping and waking in such places do not appear to have born much relation to those of light and darkness.

(8) **Particular: Henley Regatta** There has not, during recent years, been nearly enough rain. *This year it will rain hard all day.*

(9) **Particular: Ascot.** Last year, no doubt in an effort to impart some originality to the end of what had otherwise been a disastrous Season, someone in your department took it on himself to import *horses* for this function. I am a stickler for historical accuracy, but there is a limit to the extent to which I am prepared to waste public money.



"It's certainly the most colourful time of the year in our garden."



"Oh him—some kind of mutation, I suppose."



Fish and Ships

IN their very divergent ways and sizes the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co. and Trawlers Grimsby Ltd. (now the Ross Group), both of whose accounts have recently been published, symbolize the briny ocean in which the fortunes of Britain must sink or swim.

The P. and O., in common with all shipping companies, has been going through a grim time. The explanation is there for all to see in the violent undulations of the freight rates index. Tramp rates which had climbed steadily for three years to a Suez Crisis peak in January 1957 then dropped back the whole way in as little as twelve months. What is involved by "the whole way" may be gauged from the fact that in January 1958 tramp rates were no better than one-third of their level a year earlier. Since then there has been a minute recovery—too small to affect the fortunes of the industry.

Passenger services fared rather better than this, and the P. and O. ventures in the Pacific, where American shipping competition is showing signs of crumbling, look decidedly promising. These, however, are promises that will mature in the future. For the present, life aboard this and comparable companies is tough and adventurous, as witness the fall in P. and O. profits last year from £10,416,000 to £6,640,000 ("and we have not seen the worst yet," adds the Chairman, Sir William Currie).

Fortunately, this is a company which runs its finances as efficiently as its ships. The conservatism of its distributions in the past has provided an ample margin with which it has been able to meet the drastic decline in profits without cutting its dividend of 11 per cent. Even at the reduced level of profits this dividend is covered nearly three times. This is generous by most standards, though not by the usual cautious P. and O. level.

None the less, a shipping company which can go through the recent depression of freight rates with strength as unimpaired as the latest accounts reveal deserves the investor's serious consideration. The shares at around 35s. yield 6½ per cent. This is a return which discounts the "worse to come" warning and does not allow for the promised expansion in passenger liner and tanker receipts.

Now for the fish, which comes from what used to be known as Trawlers Grimsby Ltd. but has recently become the Ross Group Ltd. Behind the change of name lies an interesting story of logical diversification of activities and interests. The company began and grew as owners and operators of deep sea trawlers. Quick freezing was an

obvious appendage of this trade and from the freezing of fish to that of other foods was but a short and natural step.

To-day only 40 per cent of the company's profits come from fishing operations. The rest flows from the freezing and marketing of a beautifully vitamin-balanced array of foods—fruit, vegetables and poultry—as well as from transport and engineering subsidiaries. Hence the change of name, that of the Chairman and Managing Director, a name of which a great deal more will be heard when the trumpets of a big marketing campaign sound next autumn. The company's 5s. shares at around 11s. give a yield of just over 6½ per cent. They are not over-priced and look attractive.

— LOMBARD LANE



In the Country

... They Only Fade Away

THE news that the Russians have been tampering with the "Births, Marriages and Deaths" column again has not pleased the countryside. Longevity has always been a problem for a farmer—especially when he owns only two tied cottages.

If your cowman has put in twenty years or so strap-hanging to a bovine udder, you can hardly turn him out of doors when he becomes too old to trundle the churns, or is made redundant by a milking machine. In these circumstances the average farmer allows the old man to stay put; he then potters about his kitchen garden, picks up the old age pension, does the pools and wanders about the farm giving unwanted advice. One becomes solicitous about his health and a trifle anxious lest it should be too good.

It is a quandary. I myself am more than concerned about the obstinate vitality and persistent rude health of an estate carpenter whose hands became too

rheumatic to hold a plane when he was seventy, but is still holding his own at ninety. In spite of the ministrations of the local doctor the man persists in living. And the facts are that I've no chance of putting a new carpenter into the cottage until the old one moves to his timely grave.

And to add to our difficulties, veterinary science has made some unwarranted advances too. Of course I have always loved animals. If I hadn't I would have sent Violet to the knacker's fifteen years ago, when the old mare's plod failed to keep up with the new tractor. Instead I decided to let her run in my best meadows and enjoy her last summer. But there doesn't seem to be one. She eats her head off and consumes as much hay as three cows. Besides which she consumes about half a hundredweight of crushed oats a week. I suppose this pensioner costs me a pound a week. Violet is now thirty-five. It's an indecent age for a horse. We used to say a mare was aged in her teens. True, her teeth are getting worn, but I have a horrid suspicion that the vet will be able to fix her up with dentures.

— RONALD DUNCAN

PUNCH EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition of fifty years of *Punch* cinema cartoons and caricatures is on view at the Holloway Gaumont, by arrangement with the Rank Organisation.

The "*Punch* in the Theatre" Exhibition is now at Colchester Repertory Theatre.

Essence of



Parliament

THE House seems to be doing its Lent in a big way this year, and it has been Word-Eating Week there with a vengeance. First Monday, on the Egyptian Agreement—not a happy day for the Government with M. Suslov and other Russians sardonically looking down from the Gallery. Mr. Heathcoat-Amory was in as bad form as he has been seen this Parliament and pretty obviously did not much like what he had to do. The Lords did not like it much better on Thursday. The Prime Minister, at the end, though he got his Tory cheers, did not really make things much better. He gave a long catalogue of the things which Mr. Gaitskell had forgotten—the various misdemeanours of Colonel Nasser. This was all to justify the Suez War. What the Prime Minister seemed to have forgotten was that the Suez War was, as was pretended, not about Colonel Nasser's seizure of the Canal at all but to stop the Israeli-Egyptian War. So far as Front Benchers went it was indeed on the whole Mr. Gaitskell's day, and he might have pleaded that if it was captious to bring up Suez all over again before the Prime Minister's speech it was certainly abundantly justified to bring it up after that speech. But the main interest in the debate was



Mr. Ernest Davies

to see if any back benchers would produce anything other than the dreary round of hack arguments. Liberals obviously are at an advantage in such a contest, and Mr. Bonham Carter made effective use of his advantage. Of Conservative back benchers it was Lord Lambton who gave the most sign of thinking for himself. In contrast with some of his colleagues who blamed the Socialists for having pressed for an agreement on any terms, he blamed them much more justly for not having pressed for an agreement, and argued

that we could have got a better agreement two years ago.

A little brouhaha about roads on Tuesday, with Mr. Ernest Davies leading for the Opposition and the most interesting speech from Mr. Deedes, who, while everybody else was clamouring simply for roads and more roads, put in an important and rare plea for the preservation of aesthetic decency in the building of them.

Apart from the main debate there were a couple of personal tiffs on Wednesday—between Dr. Edith Summerskill and Mr. Tufton Beamish about whether Mr. Beamish did or did not have influenza, and whether he did or did not sell drugs; and between Mr. Callaghan and Mr. Bottomley on the one hand and Mr. Alport on the other about Mr. Clutton-Brock. The latter

was the more important, but anything in which Dr. Summerskill is involved is always vaguely funny.

On Cyprus on Thursday Lord Lambton opposed the settlement by speech, and Lord Hinchinbrooke, it seems, could not bring himself to support it by vote. But apart from that everyone welcomed it. Yet

there was a good deal of word-eating on both sides. The major word-eating came clearly from the Government. Whatever hairs may be split about Lord Colyton's famous words, it is beyond argument that for a long time the Government did give the impression to its supporters that we could never surrender sovereignty over Cyprus and that now we are surrendering it. In so far as he was hammering away at that point Mr. Bevan was talking from strength and he could enjoy himself, but he, too, had his difficulties. When



Lord Lambton

he mentioned Dr. Nkrumah as an example of a man whom the Government had first arrested and has subsequently had to accept, Mr. Callaghan and Mr. James Griffiths pulled vigorously at his coat-tails. They reminded him that it was the Socialists who had arrested Dr. Nkrumah. In similar spirit Mr. Iremonger across the

floor of the House reminded them that whatever Lord Colyton may have said about the impossibility of surrendering sovereignty, Mr. John Dugdale had said much the same when the Socialists were in power. As a result by the end honours were tolerably even, if indeed any

honours there were, and the House adjourned to hear that a good proportion of the electors of Harrow had registered their protest against it by abstaining.

But if the Government has had to do a good deal of word-eating about Suez and Cyprus, the Opposition has had to do a good deal of it about unemployment. There Mr. Macleod certainly won hands down. His most telling point was that for all the banging and bawling of Mr. Jay and his friends there was really no difference between what the Opposition was suggesting should be done and what the Government was doing.

Mr. Macleod, noteless except for some Socialist pamphlets, had some admirable cracks. "I have no doubt that the Opposition will improve. The first seven years in Opposition are always the most difficult." "I can't help it if every time the Opposition are asked to name their weapons they pick boomerangs." This shines by contrast with the Opposition, whose idea of exquisite humour is to wait until Mr. Rodgers chances to begin a sentence with "We are fully conscious" and then to burst into guffaws of laughter.

— PERCY SOMERSET

Motor If You Must

By J. B. BOOTHROYD



3 Driving It

Continuing the survey of deterrents to owner-drivership

DO not be in too much of a hurry to drive. Once you actually get the car on the road you are a committed motorist and there is no going back.* In the years to come you will think wistfully of the carefree early days when mere ownership was enough, when the mere presence of a shape outside the front door, swaddled in half an old barrage balloon, gave you ten times the thrill of driving your wife's family to Stonehenge and back. My advice is to extend this honeymoon period as long as possible. To get your automotive excitement from passing a duster over the bonnet, flourishing a drop of oil into the queasy door-handles, or simply walking round and round the whole thing trying to believe that it's yours, is one of the purest of pleasures, besides being a cheaper form of recreation than motoring proper, which involves, of course, petrol, oil, wind, water, dainty teas, trouble with the police and upwards of £8 10s. for being towed home. As long as the car remains stationary, possibilities are limitless.

*Except for your wife's glasses.

After that, steel yourself for disillusion. However, the chances are that in the end the call of the road will prove too strong. One day you will wake with a wildness in your blood, and come home that evening with two L-plates in a brown paper bag. These, which at this time seem the symbols of your emancipation, will in the coming weeks undergo a slow transmutation into badges of shame; statistics show that nine out of ten of first offences against the great body of motoring legislation are committed by men who pull into a secluded lane and remove their L-plates before their time. There is provocation for this under several heads. It is galling, for instance, as you travel sedately along at a statutory 30 m.p.h., feeling one vast L-plate from stern to stern, to be passed without warning on your near side by a zig-zagging, fully suffraged grandma with her offside indicator out and a rear door open. It doesn't seem fair. Again, you are by now regretting having asked the man next door, a qualified licence-holder but with little else to recommend him, to provide the required company on your first outing. Granted it was either he or your brother-in-law, but even so you made the wrong choice. The man next door gets the impression (a) that he is to be your permanent companion until your day of freedom dawns, and (b) that it is a part of his duties to teach you to drive. In the confined space of a smallish car nerves fray easily. By comparison, life aboard a submarine is gay and relaxed. As to (a), the full force of L-driver feeling was only generally realized during the Suez petrol rationing. As the news came crackling through the car radios that tests were to be suspended and the L-driver's left-hand man was not for the time being obligatory, thousands of learners braked hard (no

signal), put their passenger out in the hedge, and drove on alone.

As to (b), no one needs to be taught to drive; there's nothing to driving; anyone can do it. What needs to be taught is how to pass the driving test, which is something else altogether. To be able to drive means getting from one place to another without losing any time, or knocking down a policeman, or fracturing your no-claim bonus; this is a very different thing from being able to pass the test, which deals chiefly in starting on steep hills, where only a fool would stop anyway, and knowing that if a public transport vehicle comes to a halt just in front of you there's a possibility that someone will get off it.

Despite the rich flow of facts and figures on mental illness to-day no one has yet sieved out the number of hospital beds given over to cases of driving-test hysteria. Perhaps no one has dared. Any time now the test waiting-list is expected to top the five hundred thousand mark—and every one of them a full-blown neurotic, gobbling phenobarbitone by the bagful and buttonholing complete strangers to ask them if it's true that you can be hanged for bribing an examiner. Men awaiting a test summons can't eat, sleep or think. Empires may fall, epidemics rage, wives run off with U.S.A.F. captains, but none of it registers. Their lives are pin-pointed on the ordeal ahead, their alphabet of existence telescoped to one red L. Sometimes, glancing in at the window of a crawling car, you will see a screwed-up, glazed-faced man, his jaw-muscles working, his knuckles ebony-white as he grips the wheel dead east and west and grinds along the gutter with all the dash and abandon of a very old watercart. A touch on your hooter and he will turn sharp left into a newsagent's display



counter. This is the man who has taken the test once and failed. If he has failed twice he looks much the same but has his eyes shut.

This probationary period is a time of alarming rumours. Angry, red-eyed men in pubs will tell how they were disqualified for refusing to set the car at the Duke of York's steps, and go on about an examiner who struck a friend of theirs across the mouth with a copy of the Road Vehicles (Excise) (Prescribed Particulars) Regulations, 1957, because he turned up on the day with a dirty back window. Women contestants who spent eleven guineas on a hat describe how the examiner ruled them out on their oral test alone without even glancing at it. You should remember that it is only human nature for a failed candidate to paint his experience in lurid colours, and I advise you, during this time, to reserve your discussions for those who have succeeded. For some reason they never tire of telling everyone what a walk-over it all was. On the other hand, beware of false confidence thus induced. Many unjust charges are levelled at the Minister of Transport's henchman; one true one is that they take a poor view of the "Morning, old boy, old boy" type of candidate who has scarcely got through his forward gears before offering cigars all round and taking both hands off the wheel to light them.

So much for the driving-test, and a last word of warning: if you get through, eschew the fashionable practice of giving a celebration party. The sheer frustration of having to listen to twenty-eight other people relating their test adventures when all you want to do is relate yours often leads to over-indulgence at the bar. And the one thing worse than failing to achieve a full and permanent driving-licence* is succeeding—and having it taken away by the magistrates the following week for driving under the influence with two guests on the roof.

How soon you actually get on the road as an independent motorist, once you are over the great test hurdle, depends on a variety of factors, including the state of your finances after buying the car—licensing, insuring and acquiring a

*This embarrasses you with riches when you get it, entitling you to drive steamrollers and any track-laying vehicle steered by its tracks, though your test may not have touched on these to any appreciable degree.

second-hand spotlight can sometimes double the capital outlay—and of your health, undermined by the prolonged strain of an L-plate existence; but the chief factor will be the deterrent effect of reading-up on your legal responsibilities. When first you decided to be one of this year's 1½ million new road-users there seemed nothing to it beyond getting the car and driving off to see friends in Worcester. You soon learned something of your error in this; and will by now have learned something more, after meeting the State's documentation requirements in a heavy flurry of driving

licences, road fund licences, application forms for each (giving grandmother's profession at time of death), insurance proposals, policies and certificates, buff envelopes, gummed labels and cheques, cheques, cheques. All seems now ready for the road, until you notice that a friend, whom you have idiotically invited to drop in and have a walk round the car, is standing a yard away from the bonnet with narrowed eyes. He has already been disparaging about a mild ellipsis in the nearside back wheel, and warned you that the large brown blister on the windscreen could give an



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2

opportunistic policeman a step up the ladder of promotion, but his expression this time is even more serious: it seems that he doubts very gravely whether your sidelamps are legal.

"What do you mean, legal?" You switch them on, two pitiful glow-worms.

"They work, don't they?"

"What wattage are they?"

"I didn't ask. Why?"

"H'm. What year's the car?"

"Fifty-two."

"Month?"

"March."

"Just as I thought. Do you mean to tell me you didn't know that lamps exceeding seven watts on cars first registered on or after January 1, 1952, have to be mounted with centres between 2 ft. 2 in. and 3 ft. 6 in. from the ground?"

"No."

"You're asking for trouble, boy. First copper you meet with a tape-measure in his pocket you're for it. What about that fog-lamp?"

"What about it?"

"Here, you'd better read this. Let me have it back any time."

And handing you a booklet, entitled *Is it a Crime? The Motorist and the Law*, he looks closely at one of your windscreen wipers, picks off a strip of perished squeegee, shakes his head balefully and goes. From *Is it a Crime, etc.*, you learn that practically everything is; also that doctors attending your victims at the roadside are entitled to a fee of twelve-and-sixpence.

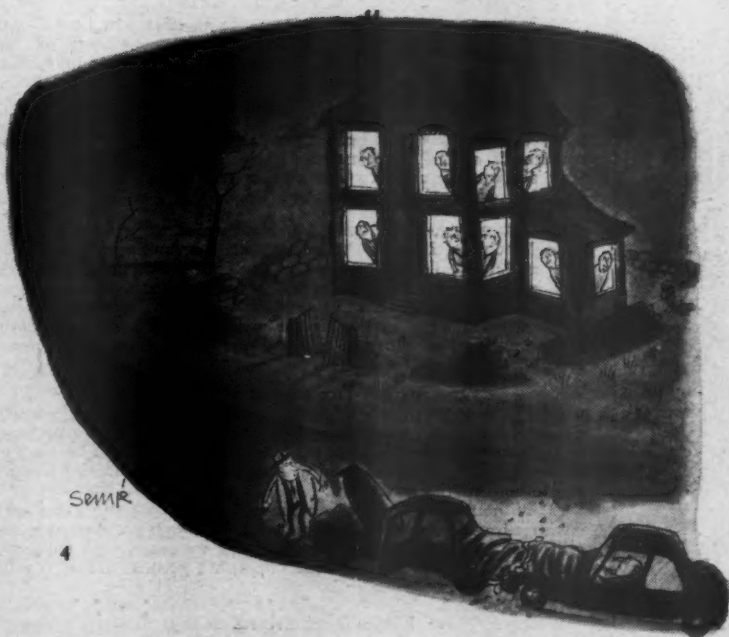
It is not my wish, as I have said earlier, to discourage you. This is a free country, and you are a taxpayer (if only negligibly, so far); you are fully entitled, if you wish, to sit with your engine switched off with nine thousand others just outside Bexhill on the first fine Sunday of the spring. But it is better to be discouraged before you start than afterwards, when you have spent the money and fainted away at hearing the suggested trading-in price. Many men plunge into owner-drivership without the benefit of such warnings as are given here. Their mistake is to take an uninformed, or pedestrian, view of the motorist. They have so often stood at bus stops and watched him glide snugly past, and the picture is misleading. They cannot see the garage-bill in his glove-compartment, and do not know that his battery is just out of guarantee and failing fast. They have no means of telling that he would rather be at home with "Armchair Theatre" than fetching his wife's uncle to supper from eighteen miles off; that his name and address have just been taken for parking near a pedestrian crossing, though the fellow-motorist who buckled his offside front wing while he was parked there got clean away with it. He gives no sign of the pain in his right ankle. His ulcer is invisible. Though the circle of coloured paper on his screen cost him £38 15s. he does not mention it as he passes by, nor shout out of the window the news that his insurance is going up by 50 per cent on January 1 next . . . though his reticence here is due, as it happens, to the fact that he doesn't know yet.

What he does know, and the man at the bus-stop doesn't, is that he only wishes he was the man at the bus-stop, going all the way home for ninepence, with a nice evening paper to read, and somebody else doing the driving.

Next week: **Parking It**



3



4

Toby Competitions

No. 61—What was Carroll up to?

THE *Wind in the Willows* is now shown to have been a concealed astringent satire. Write a critical analysis (120 words) proving that *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* were written for some ulterior adult motive.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, April 3, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 61, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 58

(A Young Man's Fancy)

Declarations of love in the idiom of a civil servant, lawyer, or advertising copy-writer flowed in bulk uniformity. In a larger entry than usual few were without merit but few rose above the general level. Once the trick of style had been caught not many hit on an additional twist. The prize goes to:

R. JONES

FAIRVIEW, HORSLEY GATE LANE,
HOLMESFIELD, NEAR SHEFFIELD

CHESTNUT GROVE

H. M. Brock's drawings appeared in *PUNCH* from 1905 to 1937



Master. "I SEE YOU'VE GOT A HORSESHOE UP THERE, PAT. I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THAT SUPERSTITION."
Pat. SURE AN' I DON'T, SIR. BUT I HAVE HEARD THAT THEM AS DON'T BELIEVE IN IT GETS THE BEST LUCK."

April 6 1910

Mr. W. Jones (To see)

Mr. K. Smith (To see)

Miss K. Smith

PERMANENT CO-HABITATION

I have recently examined in detail two established theories. Namely the supposition that a confectionery normally able to be purchased with one monetary unit costs two such units in the matrimonial state (i.e. 1=2) and the somewhat controversial hypothesis that in terms of cost of living two is equal to one.

It seems to me that a combined and possibly somewhat lengthy experiment is necessary to substantiate one of these theories.

I have decided that you, Smith, are the most suitable person to assist me in my research.

Accordingly, I am inviting you to consider a class to class promotion to Mrs. Jones, and I should be glad to have your formal acceptance before the end of the present Income Tax Year.

The following runners-up receive book tokens:

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

MY ADORABLE LITTLE "DEVIL,"—I can only regard your precipitate departure from my chambers last night as a *quia timet* action for which you had no reasonable or probable grounds. When I asked if I might see your briefs I was actuated solely by a desire to take a more intimate part in your future and not by any improper motive. I have for some time felt that our interlocutory proceedings were becoming unduly protracted and that a permanent settlement would be in the interest of both parties. I propose therefore that we enter into a matrimonial contract to be performed at a time and place to be selected by you.—A. C. 33 Thurlow Square, S.W.7

DEAREST MYRTLE,—FOUND YOUR FUTURE ON THESE * FEATURES

* I smoke BARNER'S LAVENDRIFF—that heavenly lavender aroma—no nasty tobacco smells!

* Voted "BRITAIN'S MOST WANTED MAN" by 356 lady visitors to BATTLING HOLIDAY CAMPS in 1958.

* Luxury! Ten-year contract with SMUDGE DETERGENT CORP. (the SMUDGE Skylight Test), fifteen-year contract with SUMP SOAPLESS SHAMPOO (Puts the waste oil back in your hair), and five years to go with WAGGO, the WONDER DOG FOOD (Goldfish love it, too!) assures surtaxable income with wonderful "business" cruises and the most in expense accounts.

* And what comfort to know always that you have my life insured with the BENEVOLENT, the humane insurance company!

WHY DELAY? WRITE Yes! TO-DAY!

Peter Gardner, New House, Easthampton, Kingsland, Leominster, Herefordshire

DEAR PRUNELLA,—I am writing to make an offer, but time is not of the essence. Are you willing to give up the estate of *femme sole* for my sake? I apologize for not suggesting this before but in mitigation I plead my own sense of unworthiness. At last I have elected to go for trial by you; will you find in my favour? My fees will be adequate to maintain us and we are young enough to mortgage our matrimonial home with any *bona fide* building society. I believe our consortium could be blissful. Please consent, darling. It is, of course, a matter for your absolute discretion. The verdict will be yours.—John York, Crondall, Near Farnham, Surrey

DEAREST EMILY,—Life being but blank space while I occupy only a single column, I ask you to marry me. I am not a bold type, but now am forced to face matters. Our outlooks should not betray wide margins even though my origin is of lower case than yours, and you would always occupy a *solus* position. Consent, dearest; let me throw my large cap in the air for joy, and seek a council house, indenting for two Ems.—Geoffrey Peachey, 37 Woodland Avenue, Hove 4, Sussex

APPLICATION FOR DOUBLE TENDER ACTION

(1) I refer to the minute (Ref. O.D.R./1) dated 1.4.56 (p.m.) in which the vital statistics you submitted—without, I trust, undue pressure on my part—afforded me some expectation of concluding a satisfactory contract, which if implemented without delay could prove advantageous to both parties concerned.

(2) Without prejudice to any other exploratory action you may have envisaged, will you please indicate without delay your acceptance or otherwise of a form of contract to which we could both subscribe without reserve and which would establish a permanent and fruitful union?

(3) Submitted.

—Hubert E. Furse, Willow Bend, Broomfield Ride, Oxshott, Surrey



BOOKING OFFICE

Weeping Willows

Kenneth Grahame. 1859-1932. *A Study of his Life, Work and Times*. Peter Green. Murray, 30/-

VERY, very occasionally, as a critic of biography, one comes across a vintage champagne among the *vins ordinaires*. I have just discovered a vintage biography. And in case anyone should imagine, from the metaphor, that this is just a heady but effervescent favourite, let me say at once that Mr. Green's *Kenneth Grahame* is the most adult and rewarding Life I have read for some years.

The great children's writers of the last century (Carroll, Andersen, Lear) were notoriously unhappy; driven inside themselves because they were awkward or ugly, because they felt displaced in the harsh and everyday world, they lost themselves in the world of fantasy. Kenneth Grahame was no exception to the bitter rule. His mother died when he was a child, his father lived in solitude with his claret and self-pity, and entrusted Kenneth, his brothers and sisters to a grandmother's care. There was, then, no "proper complement of parents" to shape his childhood. He was cheated of Oxford by a stubborn Scottish uncle (it was, perhaps, the most crushing blow in his life); he was driven to make his career in the Bank of England, which he did for twenty-eight monotonous years. He was married, at forty, to a stubborn, fey, uncomprehending woman who imposed her will on him, destroyed his hopes of marital happiness, and drove him in still further upon his fantasies; and the only child of this disastrous marriage, purblind, understandably neurotic, committed suicide (ironically enough, as an Oxford undergraduate) because he was harassed by religious doubts and could not fulfil his parents' impossible dreams. Nor was this personal sadness enough; Kenneth Grahame, who, in many ways, belonged to the Age

of Elegance, witnessed the slow erosion of elegant and distinguished living: the disintegration of the pre-1914 world.

One can understand how constant disillusion with adult life made Grahame especially fond of animals and children. ("The Water Rat's quite a friend of mine," he explained to a visitor at Cookham. And "the rabbits—I have it from one of themselves—have all gone to an At Home to-day.") In *The Wind in the Willows*, which he had told as a bedtime tale to his son, he crystallized his affection for animals; he recalled, with kaleidoscopic vividness, some of the scenes and situations that had most impressed him: "Toad Hall contains elements of Harleyford Manor, Mapledurham House, and Cliveden; elsewhere Cookham merges into Cornwall, and the Thames flows seaward to Fowey." *The Wind in the Willows* often reveals Grahame's personal dilemmas: it offers a sad and broken reflection of its author. And more: it discloses his wider fears, records his sorrow at impending social change, for "it embodies in miniature

the whole essence of pre-1914 England—the smooth lawns, the river-picnics, the long, sun-drenched days of idleness, the holidays in Italy, the self-assurance and the stable values. The currents of change and revolution do little more than ruffle the surface of this summer stream: they eddy deep below, among the sinuous weeds, unseen, biding their time." The theme of *The Wind in the Willows* is the conflict between Us and Them, between the leisured rural society and "the stunted, malevolent proletariat." Alas! even Grahame was forced to indicate the ultimate triumph of the proletariat and of mechanical progress.

Mr. Green's brilliant analysis of *The Wind in the Willows*, a model of literary detection, is matched by his analysis of Kenneth and Elspeth Grahame and their child. The characters are vividly and pathetically convincing, and related to their background with constant skill. This is not an easy book to read: it exercises the mind much as a hard game of squash will exercise the body. It is not a book to skim or to dip into. It must be read at one or two thoughtful sittings; for Mr. Green explores, he does not just recapitulate. But those who enjoy intellectual exercise and adventurous biographies should make a point of reading this centenary Life of Grahame—the author whom Swinburne rightly called the children's laureate. It has caught a man and his milieu. It shows us, very clearly, which way the wind blew when it blew among the willows. I think it is a magnificent achievement.

— JOANNA RICHARDSON

POETS' CORNER



3. T. S. ELIOT

New Novels

Days and Moments Quickly Flying. Perry Madoc. Collins, 13/6

"As a little boy he would sometimes suffer agonies rather than do the right thing." So said the vicar's wife of her son, Oliver, who is the "hero" of this most deliciously high-spirited book. Most of it is as light and gay and naughty as a French



"He's the most democratic sultan we've ever had."

farce, but I doubt if even the prudish will fail to follow the young rake's progress without joy. After forging his uncle's signature (or, as he explained to his father, "flouting certain laws of property cooked up by man. Did God invent income tax? Or money for that matter?") he takes a job as a teacher in a school "for the delinquent sons of despairing parents." Later, having been involved in diamond smuggling, he is sentenced to two years' imprisonment. It is now that the author becomes serious, or as serious as his wit allows, and permits the irresistible and charming goodness of Oliver's parents to put an end (temporarily, at least) to wild-oat-sowing and rosebud-gathering. Mr. Madoc is shrewd, observant, compassionate and extremely funny; he has the knack of making all his characters, including Tomlinson, the cat, really companionable.

— B. E. B.

Goldfinger. Ian Fleming. *Cape*, 15/-

James ("007") Bond's newest adversary is a stocky ginger SMERSH agent who cheats at games and has a thing about gold. Bond's assignment is originally to check his smuggling activities, but in no time he is foiling an attempt to burgle Fort Knox. There are two routine seductions, a torture-chamber and a wildly exciting game of—wait for it—golf; but by and large both Bond and Mr. Fleming are one degree under this time. Knowing about Goldfinger's suitcases, Bond was inexcusably slow in the uptake over the Rolls's doors; and Mr. Fleming, resisting for once the influences of Colette (for sensuousness) and Chase (for sadism) offers only a chunk of neo-Sapper. Jonathan Cape—remember the old form, Mr. Fleming?—have printed it in eleven-on-thirteen point Baskerville on a thick white paper by John Dickinson and bound it in black linen embossed with gold coins.

— B. A. Y.

The Eighth Day of the Week. Marek Hlasko. *Allen and Unwin*, 10/6

This short book, even sadder than it

is short, is not sad with the dignity of tragedy, nor with the full-stop of death, but with the nagging of an ugly and lasting squalor. The theme is the desperately poor and hopeless Poland of our own day. The principal characters are Agnieszka, who, among the milling crowds of Warsaw, has kept herself for her lover, Pietrek, who has waited for her since he came from the prison camp. Among the concourse, where hardly anyone thinks of marriage, they only desire each other and a little privacy. They borrow a key, and the four walls that go with it, and the key is forgotten. Eventually another key is given them, but by then it is too late for their poor ideal: Agnieszka can only persuade Pietrek that there never was anything to wait for. We are told that the young author has reaped, at first, fame, then exile.

— B. E. S.

The Loving Cup. Derek Barton. *Michael Joseph*, 15/-

This is very well done, for Mr. Barton is of course a highly skilled, perceptive and experienced practitioner; the narrative style is subtly calculated, and on the surface the book is consistently entertaining. But on examination the characters and the atmosphere are oddly reminiscent of a more obvious and popular kind of fiction. In essentials a very loosely constructed picaresque work held together only by a series of coincidences worthy of *Dr. Zhivago*, the story is about a man back, under a cloud, from the Middle East, who explores contemporary English life and takes a succession of odd jobs in search of personal "freedom." He has an M.C. and good shoulders, he is used to the command of men, and he knocks down ("by luck more than precision"—no non-U professionalism) a bounder who is forcing his attentions on a charming girl. All the right people's hearts turn out to be in the right place. Dare one recall Ian Hay, or Dornford Yates, or even (though this is no action story) Sapper?

— R. M.

Other New Books

Small Town D.A. Robert Traver. *Faber*, 15/-

For fourteen years Mr. Traver was a District Attorney in a lakeside area of Michigan with a polyglot community of which Finns and Scandinavians formed the chief element, mostly miners, loggers and farmers. As public prosecutor and general father confessor he saw life in the raw, and this collection of sketches shows him a wise observer of human nature. His experiences ranged from guignol to wild comedy; some of the country courts might have been in Ireland. Every two years he had to fight for his job at a fresh election, and he has little good to say of the pressure of politics on the American legal system.

Mr. Traver's portraits of local worthies are splendid, and he can make court cases live excitingly. Occasionally his gift for vivid phrase trips into the facetious, but on the whole he is a robustly funny writer with a keen eye for absurdity and plenty of critical good sense.

— E. O. D. K.

The Plains of Abraham. Brian Connell. *Hodder*, 21/-

Wolfe's victory over Montcalm at Quebec, that prepared the way for American independence, was the last big throw in five years of a war astonishingly muddled on both sides. Until Pitt came to power the British Government never began to grasp the issues; incompetent generals, chosen for their social connections, succeeded one another in the command of inadequate forces, while the colonists remained cynically determined to be defended by somebody else. Even George Washington, loyally fighting with the militia, was hamstrung by professional jealousy. New France was savagely disciplined, but its strength was undermined by a fantastic system of organized corruption.

From this tragic mess Wolfe and Montcalm both stood out, lonely, brilliant and incorruptible; Wolfe, desperately ill but still with the ruthless efficiency that wins battles. Mr. Connell's well-documented book makes sad but fascinating reading. He keeps one ear cocked to the politics of London and Versailles, and his writing, which is always interesting, rises to the challenge of the high drama of Quebec.

— E. O. D. K.

The Zimmermann Telegram. Barbara W. Tuchman. *Constable*, 18/-

Here is a flow of secret-agent sensation applied to world history with a gusto that would be near comic were it not all so deadly serious. Mrs. Tuchman shows that the notorious German Foreign Office telegram of January 17, 1917, offering Mexico half a million square miles of United States territory in exchange for an alliance in conjunction with Japan was in fact the culmination of years of urgent ramifying intrigue. The

thrill and suspense of her story turn on the famous breaking of a German secret code in London, the tormented wrestlings of the peace-loving President and the shattering final lapse into honesty of Zimmermann himself. The background chucklings of the cipher readers are thrown in for good measure.

All this fact as good as fiction is matched in the telling by a rather startling generosity of home-made metaphor, but the quick incidental character studies and the scholarly bibliography are not unworthy of the portentous outcome—the entry of America to the first world war.

— C. C. P.

CREDIT BALANCE

Roses. R. Genders. Foyle, 3/-. A useful and compact volume, containing everything one needs to know, though it overestimates the quantities of spray, and so on, needed for most gardens, and also the fragrance of most modern roses.

Mythologies. W. B. Yeats. Macmillan, 21/-. Reissue in one volume of Yeats' mythopoeic fragments and collections of folklore. Fascinating to those interested in his poetry, and enjoyable and often very funny in its own right.

Catchment Area. James Harrison. Oxford University Press, 10/6. Poems, quiet and good, mainly in the area between Frost

and Auden, though sometimes lacking the tact of the former or the drive of the latter.

Dictionary of French Literature. Edited by Sidney D. Braun. Peter Owen, 42/-. Introductory reference-book with enough space for some crisp criticism, particularly useful on moderns. Compiled by American academics. Illustrations of authors looking simultaneously literary and French. Odd omissions, e.g., Courteline's novels.

The Uninvolved. Peter de Polnay. W. H. Allen, 13/6. Very readable, sentimental comedy. Rich publishers involved with amoral wail. The improbable, predictable story moves on via the unexpected scene. Mr. de Polnay is as highly professional a "quality" entertainer as Sir Compton Mackenzie.

AT THE PLAY

Le Dindon (PRINCES)
Wolf's Clothing (STRAND)
The Magistrate (OLD VIC)

FEYDEAU's stylish bit of knockabout involves four married couples, a demi-mondaine and an odd man out, and their various infidelities occupy three acts (two of them centred on beds) without faltering from the highest level of comedy. *Le Dindon* ("goose" in this context rather than "turkey," i.e. mug) is, in fact, the very model of a French bedroom farce. No point in following

the individual seductions; it is enough to say that they are contrived with marvellous skill and a faultless sense of what will come off in the theatre. 'Scenes like that where deaf old Mme. Pinchard gets into an hotel bed with an alarm-bell (arranged, of course, for someone else) under the mattress, or where Rédillon, exhausted by eleven hours in bed with Armandine, finds himself at once required to make love to Mme. Vatel, reveal the craft behind the foolery.

Production and acting are impeccable. M. Jean Meyer drives the play along at a smart pace, a hint of artificiality never far away as the stage picture flows from tableau into tableau. M. Meyer also plays Vatel, one of the erring husbands, giving him a sheepish grin that recalls Fernandel and an aura of propriety that clings to him even as he goes to bed in long pants and a silk hat.

With a cast of such uniform distinction it would be unfair to single anyone out for special praise. Denise Noel provides the allegedly English Maggy Soldignac with an accent that would drive Mr. Berlitz to despair, and Louis Seigner shows us in the veteran Pinchard the French equivalent of the Ronald Squire-archy, but they stand out from the general excellence only because their parts are more sharply characterized. If this is what a National Theatre is like, let's have one immediately.

Mr. Kenneth Horne has only two couples and an odd girl to play with in *Wolf's Clothing*, but even so he has left his canvas remarkably bare. Into the boringly respectable (and appallingly decorated) sitting-room of Julian and Sally Calvert come, first, Janet Spicer on one of her periodical flights from her unfaithful husband, then Andrew, the husband, on his usual fielding operation. "For certain reasons," in the author's ominous phrase, the husbands sleep with the wrong wives. It takes them two acts of the profoundest banality for them to do so, and one more to sort it out, with every revelation signalled five minutes ahead and no subtlety permitted to the cast deeper than a slow double-take. Mr. Horne, whom I take to be very old, lives in a world where people still address one another as "old man" and servants tidy up while the late-comers blunder into the stalls. It's not a world I care for much, but it is only fair to say that a number of its denizens appeared to be present and enjoying themselves in the audience.

The Magistrate at the Old Vic—this is Farce Week in London—reveals Pinero rather unexpectedly as a kind of English Feydeau. The play is more-or-less contemporary with *Le Dindon*, and the middle act takes place in an hotel and ends with an irruption of policemen; but although the contrivances are similar the outlook is characteristically different. Instead of seduction, Pinero can imagine



Julian Calvert—DEREK FARR

Andrew Spicer—PATRICK CARGILL

[*Wolf's Clothing*

no dissipation more abandoned than a stag-party in a dubious hotel; instead of the bed, there is the supper-table. *The Magistrate* calls for the same kind of suspension of disbelief as "Dracula" or "Frankenstein." You must believe that twenty-seven-year-old Mr. Barry Ingham is nineteen-year-old Cis Farringdon being passed off by his mother as

REP SELECTION

Canterbury, Marlowe Theatre, *The Indifferent Shepherd* until March 28 (not Good Friday).
Hornchurch, Queen's Theatre, *George Dillon* until March 28.
Ipswich Theatre, *The Two Mrs. Carrolls* until March 28.

fourteen, and that his stepfather, a London stipendiary, accepts this as his true age simply because he is wearing an Eton suit too small for him. Believing this, you will have no difficulty in believing that Cis could lure his stepfather to a late supper at the Hotel des Princes, that his mother and his aunt and two comic military men should all find their way there at the same time, that it should be raided by the police for licensing offences, and that the magistrate, after being chased as far as Kilburn by the law, should sentence the rest of them in his court next morning to seven days without the option.

Personally, I believed it all avidly, falling out of my seat with laughter from time to time as I did so. Douglas Seale's production is admirably free from condescension; this is clearly Pinero as Pinero wanted it, not nineteenth-century Boy Friendery. Michael Hordern sounds exactly the right note as the gullible stepfather, and John Phillips as Colonel

Lukyn bestrides the hilarious second act like a comic Colossus. Mr. Ingham, once he has got out of his Etons, is a properly handsome and dashing Cis. The whole cast, indeed, hit a commendably high level.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Catch *Creditors* (11/3/59) at the Lyric, Hammersmith; it may not come again for years. *Valmouth* (8/10/58) is well-distilled Firbank with music. Best bet for the Easter holidays, *Not in the Book* (16/4/58)—unless, of course, you have tickets for *My Fair Lady* (7/5/58) or *West Side Story* (24/12/58).

—B. A. YOUNG

AT THE PICTURES

The Thirty-nine Steps *Life Together*

THE John Buchan novel has no more relevance to a consideration of the new version of *The Thirty-nine Steps* (Director: Ralph Thomas) than it had to the Hitchcock version in mid-1935; indeed, a good deal less. This amounts to a new version of the Hitchcock work, not a new version of the book. The 1935 film dwelt lovingly on the difficulties of Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll handcuffed together, and this dwells lovingly on those of Kenneth More and Taina Elg in a similar position. Nothing resembling this was in the book at all.

But (I don't claim to have many very exact memories of the Hitchcock film, but I have seen it at least twice since that first time) I would say that this version is played very much more for laughs, and even less for real suspense. *Anything* that offers a momentary laugh seems to

have been stuffed in at any convenient opportunity. This in itself is fatal to the development of suspense . . . even if it had not been killed already by the fact that Richard Hannay as played by Kenneth More is quite plainly regarding the whole affair as a game, and not taking any of it seriously. An indication that the film-makers aren't in the least concerned that we should take any of it seriously either is that Taina Elg, a sleek, willowy, exquisitely-dressed beauty, is stated to be a girls' school netball coach, and an outstandingly good one. The reference to this is simply put in as a punch-line at the end of a schoolgirl conversation, just for the laugh; once they've got the laugh, they don't expect the audience to remember or think about the fact, and as far as ninety per cent of a British audience is concerned they're quite justified.

Well, I suppose the minority of us who do "connect" have to face the fact that most people prefer to get their enjoyment from a string of small effects and can't be bothered to think of any connection between them—just as they would rather read (or hear) twelve one-hundred-word anecdotes than one twelve-hundred-word story. If the anecdotes have the same central figure, someone they like, that's fine: they think the collection is a story. Here they have the dashing Kenneth More being pursued through various comically threatening situations (each with its little group of character players), always on the point of capture and always at the last moment avoiding it, sometimes by audacity and resource, more often by plain luck. Cue—in either event—for laugh. There are also nice colour photography (Ernest Steward) and amusing small-part playing, and even a sort of plot—not that anyone is expected to notice it.

Another collection of episodes is Sacha Guitry's last film, *La Vie à Deux* or *Life Together* (Director: Clément Duhour), but this is aimed at a rather more alert and literate audience. Indeed the words are remarkably important, and because of this it has been described as too "talky." It will give most pleasure to those who have at least a little French and can (with the help perhaps of a quick glance at the titles) get some idea of the wit in much of the dialogue which is delivered with such fascinating crispness by a cast that includes nine or ten stars.

Words, and clever acting—these are the strength of the piece, and it is essentially a collection of playlets; and yet, somehow, it gives little impression of staginess, even though there is hardly any use of really cinematic technique. The playlets, all concerned with conjugal infidelity, are strung on a thread of a story about an author who, knowing he is near death, wants to choose his heir from the people on whom his greatest success was based. The idea is to find



Richard Hannay—KENNETH MORE

[*The Thirty-nine Steps*]

one couple who are still as "happily married" as when he wrote about them, and of course in every instance the investigators arrive just as there is entertaining evidence to the contrary. It's all very artificial, but stylish and amusing.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Greek *A Matter of Dignity* (11/3/59) is still top of my list. Others in London: *Separate Tables* (25/2/59), *Carlton-Brocne of the F.O.* (18/3/59), *Gigi* (18/2/59), the classic *La Grande Illusion* with *March to Aldermaston* ("Survey," 25/2/59), and *Room at the Top* (4/2/59).

One very good new release: *Danger Within* (4/3/59).

— RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE BALLET

Dances Concertantes (COVENT GARDEN)

THE former Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet brought to its marriage with the Covent Garden company a by no means negligible dowry. Already the Royal Ballet in which they are united has been enriched this season with Cranko's *Harlequin in April* and Andrée Howard's lovely *La Fête Etrange*. The latest addition to the Royal Opera House repertory from that source is Kenneth MacMillan's first essay in choreography for the Sadler's Wells dancers, *Dances Concertantes*. Inspired by that pre-eminent inspirer of the ballet, Igor Stravinsky, he played upon classical foundations (imposed would be too ponderous a word) to create an airy, abstract conceit reminiscent of the geometrical manner of Balanchine, but having the now recognizable stamp of originality which has marked subsequent MacMillan ballets.

The originality comes out in his grafting of the modern, not excluding suggestions of jive and kindred angular and staccato modes, on the old. He sets his dancers a difficult course of vivacious and unpredictable steps and they bring it off with tremendous *éclat*. Gay and frivolous, but masterly in conception and execution, the work is a total exercise in virtuosity. Done indifferently well it would be a tiresome bore.

On the whole the piece gains from transference to the larger stage. In particular Nicholas Georgiadis's setting and costumes are extremely effective.

Maryon Lane was at the top of her form on the opening night of the revival. Partnered admirably by Pirmin Trecu in the leading role, she carried off her exacting assignment with captivating *brio*. Doreen Wells and Merle Park were, with Desmond Doyle, Richard Farley, Ronald Plaisted and Petrus Bosman, prominent among the dancers.

— C. B. MORTLOCK

ON THE AIR

Steam Magazines

NOW that "Saturday Night on the Light," that bizarre marathon of entertainment, has finished its course, readers with a moment to spare may care to join me in wondering what it was for. Week after week it has been jogging round its three-hour laps at a pace so steady that I can't believe that anyone's heart was beating faster when it breasted the tape. As a farewell gesture I listened to the whole thing right through, and as snippet of fun followed gobblet of song I lay on my sick-bed and stared at my specifics in a tame surmise: was anyone else listening, right through? And I mean listening.

I would have thought that Saturday night was a time when people had some sort of plan or purpose to keep themselves amused; that is when the television people dish out great slabs of spectaculars and wodge of film. But SNOL was a crib from an attempt by American steam radio to win back listeners from television; someone must have figured that the intellectual appetite of screen watchers had become so weakened that the only hope lay in a diet of aimless pap. The American programme, coincidences being what they are, was called "Monitor" and was, surprisingly, a mild success.

The weakness of the idea in England has been that it has never been at all clear who the programme was aimed at; also one was never told beforehand where the particular items advertised were going to fall in that vast desert of time, so it was always impossible to listen to the thing selectively. The listener the producers seem to have had in mind was an aimless, if amiable, drifter who didn't particularly want to listen to anything very much anyway. Not an inspiring audience.

By contrast "To-day," the breakfast magazine, has a lot to be said for it. That is the time for snippets and gobblets. Nobody with a train to catch or children to dust down and trundle off to school (like getting out of prison, that is) can afford to sit enthralled by a half-hour item. But a breakfast programme doesn't mean a procession of five-minute funnies, like a pile of diabetic rolls at which one can chew and chew and get nothing in one's stomach. One of the excellencies of the "To-day" formula is the balance of serious bits; and I don't mean only "What's going on in Ghana"; I include the market prices of vegetables.

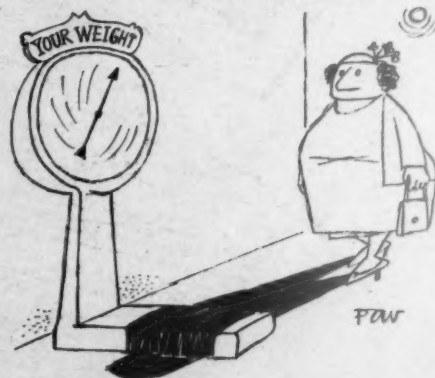
I only listen to "Woman's Hour" when I am cross-eyed with influenza, which makes me, if not the ideal critic, something very near the traditional one. These brief, jaundiced glimpses seem to me to be another proof that the clearer the conception of the audience, the better the hotch-potch served up to them. This is for the housewife doing the ironing, or resting her poor feet, and is pleasant, low-tension stuff, and doesn't rely too

much on all-girls-togetherness. Despite the mass of work that must go into it there is an engaging note of amateurishness; in fact last time I listened I felt that there was a danger of this being overdone; all over England I visualized mutters of "Why, I could do that," irons put down, typewriters reached for and half a million MSS. put in the post.

But the advantages of producing a magazine for a particular audience have their limits. Once you get among the fanatics—the boat-builders, the coin-collectors, the pure-jazz-mongers—you know that they will listen to anything you produce on their own subject, even if it makes them waggle their ears with rage. I myself am prepared to read the dingiest print or listen to the most idiotic old phony speaking with his mouth full of lentils provided his subject is bridge. This fanaticism among readers is what makes most written technical magazines look as if they were printed with type left over from an early Fabian manifesto and slung together by an action printer. The equivalent result on radio is usually a wash of jargon scattered through the least convincing "Discussions" ever recorded. These roost in Network Three. There seem to be fewer of them now than when the network started, and quite right too; good discussions are a wasteful way of putting a thing over, unless the disputants really do disagree. An exception is the chess consultation match they are running at the moment, with three players at either end worrying away about each move. No player I, but I enjoy hearing them think.

Not that the magazines on Network Three are full of bad stuff; most of it is fascinating. There was, for instance, a marvellous account by St. John Nixon of road-testing the earliest motor-cars which was full of the sort of delight one finds in Kipling's early motoring stories. But most of the people who do the introducing of the various items speak as if they had lost all faith in the spoken word. Ironically, "Sound," the programme for radio and recording enthusiasts, is one of the worst offenders. If these programmes were printed magazines there would be competition for them and a spur to improvement. As it is I listen gloomily.

— PETER DICKINSON



In the Dough

BY IAN MACKENZIE

NOT everybody who earns his daily bread in London does it in the daytime. I don't mean burglars, coppers, all-night bus-drivers and other kindred fly-by-nights, but all those characters like myself who prefer to spend the day in bed or at the races or studying for the Bar or something.

You can meet a lot of them cleaning out Tube trains or, where I met most of my acquaintances—at the bread factories. London eats a lot of bread and the people who live outside London eat a whole lot more.

You clock on at about eleven at night and join a whole host of oddly assorted bodies all making for the changing rooms. No matter what sort of get-up you come in with—tweeds, black coat with frayed cuffs, polo-neck sweater and jeans—you all emerge in uniform white coats looking very professional, like a lot of surgeons at some operation that's never been done before.

If you happen to be a baker then your coat is really white.

My mate was a little chap who told me he was a well-digger on the run from his missus. She had talked, he said, from the day they left the church up to the twenty-first birthday of their fifth boy. "Just as she was proposing the toast to my youngest," he said, "I came downstairs with my suitcase packed. I told all the guests that I was leaving and gave the boy ten quid. I put the deeds of the house on the table and slipped out before they could say bon voyage or kiss me arm. She's been after me several times, and I had to leave the well-digging business because everybody knows you. I thought she wouldn't find me if I came to London, but she's on my trail now so I'm working here."

I couldn't match that story, so I told him that I was a bookwriter getting experience for a novel on the lives of bread bakers. He accepted this but

the rest of the gang were disappointed. Everybody else in the squad was there for far better, more exciting reasons.

We worked in pairs loading the vans. We had about five vans in each bay and they took a hell of a lot of filling with white, wholemeal, sandwich, rolls and what-have-you. My mate, being the little 'un, would get up in the back of the van and peer out at me like a little dog in a big kennel.

"Come on," he would say, "sooner you start sooner you finish." The drivers, who were also commission salesmen, did not like it if their van was the last out. They said so in a lot of short words repeated many times. We would wheel the bread up in trolleys straight from the slicing machines, which also wrapped the loaves in greaseproof paper. Sometimes if the bread was too warm to wrap and slice it would crumble and clog the blades. Then production would be held up while the engineer cleared them. On one occasion a new operator tried to clear the machine without switching it off. He lost part of his finger and held us up for a long time. On another night the same chap somehow managed to get all his greaseproof paper on fire. On a third occasion he let a trolley-load of sandwich collide with one full of wholemeal and we had to get the lot sorted out. He was a decent fellow really and a good table-tennis player. He just didn't have the luck, I suppose.

I was unlucky to start with. I miscounted the bread more than once and we had to re-check it while the driver hopped on one foot and swore in time with the counting. It took me ages to find out how to stack French bread without it all falling down as soon as the driver jumped into his seat.

After I thought I had mastered the art of bread-packing I was given a mate and sent to load a few vans on my own responsibility. This was a big step forward and honestly I tried my best. My mate was my undoing. He was a good-looking wavy-haired chap of about

(continued on p. 438)



Sporting Prints

XII CHRISTINE TRUMAN



twenty-five. All through the night he kept telling me about the women in his road. He was the only man at home during the day and it seemed that he was working down one side, odd numbers first, and up the other, making love to them all. It was fascinating to listen to. He never had a refusal, he said, though once or twice he had to make two calls to talk them into it. Naturally I lost count of the bread and loaded two vans with wholemeal and sandwich instead of tin, rolls and special stuff. The foreman said I had let him down and sent me to the Belts. This was about as low as you could go. We stood at the belts all night turning the loaves two at a time as they came down every which way from the big oil-fired ovens upstairs. I thought I was managing this quite well until the belt foreman came along and said that I was "Going with the Bread."

"Going with the Bread" happens to anyone who doesn't keep his mind firmly on his work. You stand there with your two hands out, palms inward, and bring the loaves together neatly so that they go up to the man loading the trolleys ready for packing. If you don't watch what you're doing you tend to let them go farther and farther past you before you straighten them up and so you start to lean over.

You don't notice this and you think

you're standing up straight, but you're probably over at an angle like a sailor on a yacht. That's when somebody comes and taps you on the shoulder and says "Take a rest, son. You're going with the bread."

They told me that one little chap on the belt once got packed into a van through going with the bread too far, but I never believed it. I packed myself into a van once and had to get out through the little window behind the driver's seat, but I didn't tell anyone about it and they all thought I had been smoking in the lavatories.

When I had proved my worth as a belt man they promoted me to slicer's mate. I told them that I thought I had mechanical aptitude and could run a machine myself. I was after the extra ten bob a week. They didn't believe me but were hard up for slicer men. I stood at one end of the slicer, which is a very complicated looking machine, and took the bread as it came off, all sliced and wrapped, and put it on the trolleys. Then I wheeled them away and wrote down the number of the trolley on a card. It was quite a responsible job.

I never made a mistake and once missed a tea break. Sure enough I got my chance at the other end of the slicer. Admitted it was an old one and always choking up or catching fire or breaking

blades off and wrapping them in the loaves. But I made up my mind to show them that I was as good as anybody there.

On my first night I was a bit nervous. They gave me a dog-racing expert as a mate, and he told me how he used to go to the White City during the week and mark other people's cards for them. He never charged anything but merely asked for something if the dog came up. As one of them was bound to (if you marked enough dogs) he always collected from somebody. He told me of the occasion when he threw a fur glove filled with liver on to the track because the right dog wasn't getting a fair chance. The judges blew up, he said. So at that moment did the slicer.

All the waxed paper on the drum reared up for some unknown reason and meshed itself in the blades. Soft bread flew in all directions like snow on a film set, and blue smoke came out from underneath, and every slicer on the floor stopped working.

The night manager came up with a sad look on his lined face. "I'm afraid we'll have to let you go, old chap," he said to me.

"What did I do?" I said.

"God alone knows," he said, "but one thing is certain: we can't make bread with you on the premises."



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